Modern Education and Arab Nationalism in Kuwait, 1911-1961

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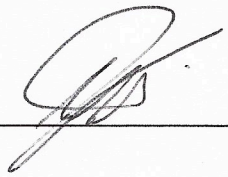
Signed: 

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to examine the role of modern education in the production of an Arab nationalist identity in Kuwait, a process that played out on multiple levels. Firstly, within Kuwait, modern schools were founded starting in 1911 with the goal of emulating the educational systems of the more developed Arab countries. Kuwaiti educational administrators relied on their ties to Arab nationalist networks to obtain assistance from educators, officials, and activists throughout the region. Kuwait's schools became increasingly "Arabized" as they imported teachers and curriculums from Arab states, most notably Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt.

Secondly, as domestic education improved, Kuwaitis increasingly pursued secondary and tertiary study in Arab countries, thus becoming integrated into Pan-Arab cultural and political networks. This became a broad phenomenon in the 1940s when oil wealth allowed for an extensive government scholarship program. Combined with the expansion of education locally, this led to the creation of a new social stratum defined by modern education, the *effendiyya* (known locally as the *muthaqqafīn*). In the 1950s, this group led the Arab nationalist opposition movement in Kuwait, while at the same time dominating certain government departments.

The Educational Department, directed by Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* and largely staffed by Arab expatriates, became a stronghold of Arab nationalism within the state. Signs of this include the introduction of Kuwait's first national curriculum in 1955-1956, which had the spread of Arab national awareness as one of its goals, and the department's support for the protest movement that erupted in Kuwait during the Suez Crisis. By the time of Kuwait's independence in 1961, however, Arab nationalist influence began to gradually decline within the department due to a number of developments.

To the memory of my grandparents:

Andrew & Margarette Farkas, & Hessa Al-Habishi,

who passed away during the writing of this dissertation.

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Introduction

In 1962, the British ambassador to Kuwait sought to evaluate the impact of state education within the newly independent country. At the time, Kuwait had close ties to Nasserist Egypt and was emerging from a period of sustained Arab nationalist activism. The ambassador largely attributed this state of affairs to education, arguing that it "taught the people of Kuwait to be Arabs." He elaborated:

> It was largely due to the foreign teachers in the [Educational] Department that the ideas of Arabism became widespread in Kuwait, at a time when the country was insulated, by the special nature of her relationship with Her Majesty's Government, from many of the contemporary developments in the Arab world. Kuwait hardly seemed to be a country which would be receptive to the ideas of the Egyptian revolution. Her future prosperity seemed to be safe, her relationship with "imperialism" too profitable. That the Amir and his family were warmly espousing the causes of the Arabs some years before the question of Kuwait's relations with her Arab neighbours became pressing, is due to the awareness of those causes which the Education Department spread in Kuwait.[1]

The ambassador was correct in identifying education as one of the primary conduits through which a growing segment of Kuwaitis interacted and came to identify with the broader Arab world.

The ambassador, however, was also mistaken on a number of counts. For one, he was clearly unaware of the long history of modern education in Kuwait. Beginning in 1911, well before the advent of state education, merchants and ʿulamaʾ inspired by Islamic modernist and Arabist ideals founded Kuwait's first modern school. Their goal was to import the modern culture of the Arab world to their peripheral shaykhdom. These early activists also contradict the ambassador's portrayal of a Kuwait "insulated" under British protection, an image that persists in contemporary scholarship. Through the press and regional networks of trade and religious learning, the merchants and ʿulamaʾ became active participants in the Pan-Arab intellectual and political scene. By the 1930s, these connections led to the emergence of a vibrant and ambitious Arab nationalist movement in Kuwait with ties to likeminded activists across the region.

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[1] FO/371/162937: Richmond to Home, 5/1/1962.

It was the Arab nationalist merchants who in 1936 founded the Educational Council, an elected body that governed state education in Kuwait. That year, the councilmen used their Pan-Arab networks to obtain the services of Palestinian teachers, who took charge of the pedagogical aspect of educational administration. Through various school activities and the adoption of the Iraqi curriculum, these teachers played a key role in spreading Arab nationalist ideas. Over the coming years, control over Kuwait's Educational Department would alternate between various educators hailing from various Arab countries, particularly Palestine, Syria, and Egypt.

As education in Kuwait became increasingly aligned with the more developed Arab countries, local students began to pursue secondary and tertiary study in the metropolises of the Arab world. They underwent "pilgrimages," becoming integrated into Pan-Arab cultural and political networks. This became a broad phenomenon beginning in the second half of the 1940s, when oil revenues allowed for an extensive government scholarship program. The scholarships played a key role in creating a new social stratum defined by its modern education: the *effendiyya*, most commonly known in Kuwait as the *muthaqqafīn*. Beginning in the 1950s, this group formed the backbone of a mass Arab nationalist opposition movement, while at the same time becoming influential within certain government departments. Chief among them was the Educational Department, which became an Arab nationalist stronghold within the Kuwaiti state.

Contrary to the British ambassador's portrayal of Arab expatriates imposing an Arab identity on unwitting locals, by the 1950s the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* were playing a leading role in teaching "the people of Kuwait to be Arabs," in cooperation with their Palestinian and Egyptian colleagues. With the adoption of Kuwait's first national curriculum in 1956, spreading Arab nationalist awareness became the Educational Department's official policy. This was expressed in its textbooks and extracurricular

and public activities. The Suez Crisis also marked the rise of coordination between the department and the Arab nationalist opposition. However, in the period between 1959 and 1961, factors including a crackdown by the ruling family and an increase in state centralization led to the onset of a gradual decline in nationalist influence within the department.

Literature Review

This dissertation engages with the literature on several subjects: Arab nationalism in the Gulf, nationalism in the Arab world, and nationalism theory, particularly as it relates to the role of education in the creation of nationalism. The first body of literature is marked by a lack of theoretical approaches. Though it provides a detailed source of information, it is largely dated and in need of updating in light of methodological innovations and newly available sources. Though more critical approaches to the analysis of political identity in the Gulf have emerged, they largely overlook Arab nationalism.

The study of nationalism in the Arab world has also long suffered from the failure to incorporate theoretical approaches. A new strand of literature has emerged that has done much to remedy this shortcoming, though further engagement with nationalism theory is still necessary. This study seeks to contribute to the discourse on nationalism in the Arab world in general through analyzing its emergence at the periphery and adopting a transnational perspective. Finally, this dissertation will engage with theoretical questions pertaining to the role of education in the production of nationalism.

Arab Nationalism in the Gulf

The earliest literature on Arab nationalism in the Gulf appeared in the 1970s and early 1980s, and is strongly imbued with the ideological spirit of the age. Though this

scholarship is hence somewhat partisan, it tends to employ social scientific methodologies that set it apart from the previous narrative historiography. Leftist authors such as Fred Halliday and Helen Lackner were among the first Western authors to devote attention to opposition movements in the Arabian Peninsula.[2] Another pioneer was the Palestinian-American scholar Rosemarie Said Zahlan, whose work highlights Arab nationalist tendencies in the Gulf and their support for the Palestinian cause.[3]

Other scholars persisted in adhering to the British imperialist line, portraying the Gulf's Arab nationalists as "extremists." J.B. Kelly serves as a prominent example.[4] A comparison between his portrayal of Kuwait and that of Halliday illustrates the ideological polarization present in some of the early literature. The former accuses the Kuwaiti state of accommodating Arab radicals, leading it "to plumb some murky, at times positively Stygian depths."[5] Halliday, on the other hand, hardly mentions nationalist tendencies in the shaykhdom, arguing that "the independent state of Kuwait displayed a political character, both internally and externally, that must have delighted its imperial masters."[6]

It was not Western authors, however, who made the biggest contribution to the historiography of the Gulf during this period; rather, a newly emergent indigenous scholarship took center stage.[7] The work of these scholars is generally anti-establishment and anti-imperialist, and employs "[broad] theoretical framework[s] in order to understand the socio-political structure and international relations of the

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[2] Helen Lackner, *A House Built on Sand: A Political Economy of Saudi Arabia* (London: Ithaca Press, 1978); Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974; London: Saqi Books, 2002).
[3] Rosemarie Said Zahlan, "The Gulf States and the Palestinian Problem, 1936-48," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1981); Rosemarie J. Said, "The 1938 Reform Movement in Dubai," *al-Abhath* 23 (1970).
[4] J.B. Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf, and the West* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980).
[5] Ibid., 174.
[6] Halliday, 433-434.
[7] Jacqueline Ismael and Tareq Ismael, "The Politics of Social Change in the Arab States of the Gulf: The View from Within," *Middle East Journal* 32, no. 3 (Summer 1978), 352.

region."[8] Often, the Gulf as a whole serves as the unit of analysis, and is situated within the broader context of the Arab world.[9] Many of these scholars, such as Khaldoun Al-Naqeeb and Muhammad Jabir al-Ansari, had Arab nationalist tendencies. They published some of the earliest in-depth articles on Arab nationalist movements in the Gulf in Arabic language periodicals.[10]

Country-level studies by Gulf scholars during this period also shed light on Arab nationalist movements. Muhammad Al-Rumaihi's history of Bahrain from World War I to the 1950s remains one of the best accounts on the country's nationalist opposition.[11] Another work that remains relevant is Najat al-Jasim's history of Kuwait in the interwar period, which contains what is still one of the most detailed treatments of the 1938 Majlis Movement.[12] A late addition to this literature is Falah Al-Mdairis's dissertation on the Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN) in Kuwait, which is remarkable in its depth and detail, relying on a mixture of local and Western sources.[13] Other Arab scholars during this period also covered the Gulf from an Arab nationalist standpoint. The most prominent is the Iraqi Saeed Khalil Hashim, whose dissertation on the connections between Iraq and the nationalist movements of Kuwait and Bahrain is exceptionally thorough and informative.[14]

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[8] Assem Dessouki, "Social and Political Dimensions of the Historiography of the Arab Gulf," in *Statecraft in the Middle East: Oil, Historical Memory, and Popular Culture*, ed. Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991), 101.

[9] See: Khaldoun Al-Naqeeb, *al-Mujtamaᶜ wa-l-Dawla fi al-Khalij wa-l-Jazira al-ᶜArabiyya: Min Manzur Mukhtalif* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihda al-ᶜArabiyya, 1987); Muhammad Ghanim al-Rumaihi, *al-Bitrul wa-l-Taghyir al-Ijtimaᶜi fi al-Khalij al-ᶜArabi* (Kuwait: Muʾasasat al-Wihda, 1975).

[10] Muhammad Jabir al-Ansari, "Tarikh al-Haraka al-Dimuqratiyya al-Ula fi al-Khalij al-ᶜArabi," *al-Muʾarikh al-ᶜArabi* 15 (1980); Muhammad Ghanim al-Rumaihi, "Harakat 1938 al-Islahiyya fi al-Kuwait wa-l-Bahrain wa-Dubai," *Majallat Dirasat al-Khalij wa-l-Jazira al-ᶜArabiyya* 1, no. 4 (1975); al-Rumaihi, "al-Nasiriyya fi al-Khalij al-ᶜArabi," *al-Thaqafa al-ᶜArabiyya* 1, no. 12 (Oct 1971).

[11] Muhammad Ghanim al-Rumaihi, *Bahrain: Social and Political Change Since the First World War* (London: Bowker, 1976).

[12] Najat ᶜAbd al-Qadir al-Jasim, *al-Tatawwur al-Siyasi wa-l-Iqtisadi li-l-Kuwait Bayn al-Harbayn (1914-1939)* (Cairo: al-Matbaᶜa al-Faniyya al-Haditha, 1973).

[13] Falah Al-Mdairis, "The Arab Nationalist Movement in Kuwait From its Origins to 1970" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1987).

[14] Saeed Khalil Hashim, "The Influence of Iraq on the Nationalist Movements of Kuwait and Bahrain, 1920-1961" (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 1984). See also: Ibrahim Khalaf al-ᶜUbaidi, *al-Haraka al-Wataniyya fi al-Bahrain 1914-1971* (Baghdad: Matbaᶜat al-Andalus, 1976).

The first wave of scholarship dealing with Arab nationalism in the Gulf, both Western and local, is distinguished by an unprecedented depth of analysis. However, its ideological coloring causes it not only to occasionally display flagrant bias as cited above, but more commonly to take social categories such as the nation for granted. Outmoded Marxist and modernization paradigms also detract from the contemporary relevance of some studies. Nevertheless, on the subject of Arab nationalism specifically, much of this literature has yet to be surpassed.

While literature on the Gulf produced during the 1970s and 1980s frequently adopted a broad regional approach, the country study started to become popular in the 1980s and became dominant in the 1990s. Due to the prominent role played by Arab nationalist opposition movements in local histories, particularly in Kuwait and Bahrain, most of these studies allocate them a significant amount of attention. However, Arab nationalism per se, as ideology, identity, and social movement, is no longer a subject of analysis. Nationalist movements are subsumed under broader analytical frameworks. In Fuad Khuri's sociological study of Bahrain, this framework is the tension between modern and tribal state models, while Jill Crystal focuses on the relationship between Kuwaiti rulers and merchants in the transition towards the rentier state.[15] Ghanim al-Najjar similarly structures his account of Kuwait's political development in the twentieth century around the struggle between opposition forces and the ruling family over participatory government.[16] In addition, Fred Lawson devotes a chapter to the nationalist movement of the 1950s in his introductory survey of the political and economic development of Bahrain.[17] A final work worthy of mention is Zahlan's history of the Gulf states, which to a large extent takes the form of a collection of

[15] Fuad Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[16] Ghanim al-Najjar, *Madkhal li-l-Tatawwur al-Siyasi fi al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: Dar Qurtas, 1996).
[17] Fred H. Lawson, *Bahrain: The Modernization of Autocracy* (Boulder, San Francisco, and London: Westview, 1989).

country studies without an overarching theoretical argument. In keeping with her earlier writings, it devotes considerable attention to Arab nationalist movements, particularly Kuwait's 1938 Majlis Movement and the 1950s opposition in Bahrain.[18]

These works are extremely useful in contextualizing Arab nationalist movements and highlighting the economic, class, and social dynamics that underlay them. However, they generally do not explain why disaffected merchants or the new intelligentsia would frame their political activism in Arab nationalist terms. They also have little to say about transnational dynamics, confining historical development within borders that were fairly porous throughout much of history. Furthermore, with the exception of Khuri and to an extent al-Najjar, these studies rely overwhelmingly on British archival material, and thus tend to lack a local perspective.

In the mid-1990s, there began to emerge a new indigenous literature on Arab nationalism in the Gulf as the region's waning nationalist and leftist movements turned towards documenting their own history. Qurtas and al-Kunuz al-Adabiyya, two publishing houses respectively affiliated with the Kuwaiti and Bahraini leftist oppositions, led this initiative. The various authors are sympathetic academics in addition to former activists. In contrast to the grand theorizing of the previous Gulf scholarship, and the more nuanced social analysis of the country studies, these works are mostly plain chronicles of political groups with little or no analysis of the wider sociopolitical context. Nevertheless, written primarily on the basis of local sources, unpublished party documents, and interviews, they provide a wealth of information and an indigenous perspective lacking in most Western scholarship.

A key author in this genre is the aforementioned Falah Al-Mdairis, who has produced numerous concise studies on the Gulf's political movements, particularly in Kuwait. These are partly based on his unpublished dissertation, but offer nowhere near

[18] Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

the same level of detail and analysis.[19] Another noteworthy work is ᶜAbd al-Nabi al-ᶜIkri's survey of the history of the region's leftist movements.[20] A number of other brief yet informative publications highlight various aspects of Bahrain's nationalist and leftist history.[21]

The numerous histories of the transnational Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN) authored by former activists comprise a similar body of literature.[22] These works offer useful information on the group's branches in Kuwait, Oman, and Yemen. Coverage of these countries, however, pales in comparison to that devoted to Iraq and the Levant. Moreover, this literature resembles that on the Gulf's political groups in its lack of theoretical pretensions or in-depth social and political analysis. Finally, Beirut's Center for Arab Unity Studies also contributed to the literature on Arab nationalism in the Gulf through two broad surveys relying primarily on secondary sources.[23]

This survey of the main bodies of writing on Arab nationalism in the Gulf, namely the early scholarship, the country studies, and the party literature, reveal a number of shortcomings. Firstly, it is very rare that Arab nationalism is examined holistically as social movement, political identity, and transnational phenomenon. The country studies submerge Arab nationalist movements within broader (albeit localized)

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[19] Falah Al-Mdairis, *al-Harakat wa-l-Jamaᶜat al-Siyasiyya fi-l-Bahrain 1938-2002* (Beirut: Dar al-Kunuz al-Adabiyya, 2004); Al-Mdairis, *al-Tawajuhat al-Marksiyya al-Kuwaitiyya* (Kuwait: Dar Qurtas, 2003); Al-Mdairis, *al-Baᶜthiyun fi al-Khalij wa-l-Jazira al-ᶜArabiyya* (Kuwait: Dar Qurtas, 2002); Al-Mdairis, *al-Mujtamaᶜ al-Madani wa-l-Haraka al-Wataniyya fi al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: Dar Qurtas, 2000); Al-Mdairis, *Malamih Awaliyya Hawla Nashᵓat al-Tajammuᶜat wa-l-Tanzimat al-Siyasiyya fi al-Kuwait 1938-1975* (Kuwait: Dar Qurtas, 1999).

[20] ᶜAbd al-Nabi al-ᶜIkri, *al-Tanzimat al-Yasariyya fi al-Jazira wa-l-Khalij al-ᶜArabi (*Beirut: Dar al-Kunuz al-Adabiyya), 2003.

[21] ᶜAbd Allah Mutaiwiᶜ, *Safahat min Tarikh al-Haraka al-ᶜUmaliyya al-Bahrainiyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Kunuz al-Adabiyya, 2006); ᶜAbd al-Munᶜim al-Shirawi, *Awraq ᶜUmaliyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Kunuz al-Adabiyya, 2005); Ahmad Humaidan, *Hayᵓat al-Ittihad al-Watani fi al-Bahrain* (Beirut: Dar al-Kunuz al-Adabiyya, 2004).

[22] Hani Hindi, *Harakat al-Qawmiyyin al-ᶜArab: Nashᵓatuha wa-Tatawuruha ᶜAbr Wathaᵓiqiha 1951-1968* (Beirut: Muᵓasasat al-Abhath al-ᶜArabiyya, 2001); Muhammad Jamal Barut, *Harakat al-Qawmiyyin al-ᶜArab: al-Nashᵓa, al-Tatawwur, al-Masaᵓir* (Damascus: al-Markaz al-ᶜArabi li-l-Dirasat al-Istratijiyya, 1997); Walid Kazziha, *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World: Habash and his Comrades from Nationalism to Marxism* (London: Charles Knight, 1975).

[23] Nur al-Din Hijlawi, *Taᵓthir al-Fikr al-Nasiri ᶜala al-Khalij al-ᶜArabi 1952-1971* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihda al-ᶜArabiyya, 2003); Mufid al-Zaidi, *al-Tayyarat al-Fikriyya fi al-Khalij al-ᶜArabi 1938-1971* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihda al-ᶜArabiyya, 2000).

contexts, such that they appear to be secondary and contingent manifestations of endogenous socioeconomic developments. The party-focused literature, obversely, limits Arab nationalism to formal organizations, ignoring its wider impact on state and society. Few studies have sought to chart a middle path between these approaches.

In addition, both genres are more or less oblivious to the transnational dynamics of these movements. The earliest literature does the best job of highlighting this point. Zahlan seeks to dispel the myth of the Gulf's isolation from Palestine. In a recent book, she expands on her earlier work on the subject, though she unfortunately forsakes her previous focus on popular movements for a regime-centered perspective. This is probably due to the fact that she passed away before completing the book, and it was published posthumously.[24] More work needs to be done on the crucial role of the Pan-Arab media, transnational political organizations, Arab expatriates, and the regional influence of Hashemite Iraq and Nasserist Egypt. There is a need for new studies in which Arab nationalism takes center stage as a subject of analysis, but is at the same time grounded in detailed analysis of both the local and transnational contexts.

Finally, perhaps the most striking deficiency in the literature on Arab nationalism in the Gulf is the virtual absence of theoretical approaches that examine the processes behind the formation of nationalism and political identity. Categories of identity, such as nation and tribe, are taken for granted and are not examined as dynamic, historically constructed artifacts. This is surprising given the salience of the struggle over identity in the history of the region. An exception in this regard is an article by Sharon Stanton Russell, which demonstrates how Kuwait's ruling family used immigration policy to foster a local identity and counter the Arab nationalist opposition.[25] The limited literature on Arab nationalism in the Gulf reveals that the

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[24] Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *Palestine and the Gulf States: The Presence at the Table* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[25] Sharon Stanton Russell, "Politics and Ideology in Migration Policy Formation: The Case of Kuwait," *International Migration Review* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1989).

topic has yet to be subjected to serious, theoretically informed analysis. Works focused on Arab nationalism are primarily descriptive, while those with a sophisticated analytical structure concentrate on other aspects.

A recent increase in academic interest in the Gulf[26] has led to the emergence of a more theoretically sophisticated literature on political identity in the region. Works on citizenship,[27] the manipulation of cultural heritage,[28] and communalist politics (sectarian, tribal, and ethnic),[29] have gone further in analyzing political identity and the processes behind its formation. The latter segment of the literature has also made significant advances in the study of the transnational dimensions of sub-state identities, challenging the state-focused approach of the 1980s and 1990s.

It is striking that, with few exceptions,[30] this new wave of scholarship devotes scant attention to Arab nationalism, despite the fact that its emergence was fundamental to the transition to modern forms of political identity in the Gulf. In some cases, the

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[26] J.E. Peterson, "The Arabian Peninsula in Modern Times: A Historiographical Survey of Recent Publications," *Journal of Arabian* Studies 4, no. 2 (Dec 2014), 245-246, 273.

[27] Anh Nga Longva, "Neither Autocracy nor Democracy but Ethnocracy: Citizens, Expatriates, and the Socio-Political System in Kuwait," in *Monarchies and Nations: Globalization and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf*, ed. Paul Dresch and James Piscatori (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005); Longva, *Walls Built on Sand: Migration, Exclusion, and Society in Kuwait* (Boulder: Westview, 1997); Mary Ann Tetreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 33.

[28] Sulayman Khalaf, "The Nationalization of Culture: Kuwait's Invention of Pearl Diving Heritage," in *Popular Culture and Political Identity in the Arab Gulf States*, ed. Alanoud Alsharekh and Robert Springborg (London: Saqi, 2008); John W. Fox et al., "Heritage Revivalism in Sharjah," in *Globalization and the Gulf,* ed. John W. Fox et al. (New York: Routledge, 2006); Sulayman Khalaf, "Poetics and Politics of Newly Invented Traditions in the Gulf: Camel Racing in the United Arab Emirates," *Ethnology* 39, no. 3 (Summer 2000); Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides, "Statecraft, Historical Memory, and Popular Culture in Iraq and Kuwait," in *Statecraft in the Middle East: Oil, Historical Memory and Popular Culture,* ed. Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991).

[29] Marc Valeri, "Nation-Building and Communities in Oman Since 1970: The Swahili-Speaking Omani in Search of Identity," *African Affairs* 106, no. 424 (Jun 2007); Anh Nga Longva, "Nationalism in Pre-Modern Guise: The Discourse on Hadhar and Badu in Kuwait," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38 (2006), 172; Nelida Fuccaro, "Mapping the Transnational Community: Persians and the Space of the City in Bahrain, c.1869-1937," in *Transnational Connections and the Arab Gulf,* ed. Madawi Al-Rasheed (London and New York: Routledge, 2005); Madawi Al-Rasheed "Transnational Connections and National Identity: Zanzibari Omanis in Muscat," in Dresch and Piscatori, *Monarchies and Nations*; Clive Holes, "Dialect and National Identity: The Cultural Politics of Self-Representation in Bahraini Musalsalat," in Dresch and Piscatori, *Monarchies and Nations.*

[30] Toby Matthiesen, "Migration, Minorities, and Radical Networks: Labour Movements and Opposition Groups in Saudi Arabia, 1950-1975," *International Review of Social History* 59 (2014); Christopher Davidson, "Arab Nationalism and British Opposition in Dubai, 1920-66," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 6 (Nov 2007).

significance of Arab nationalism is unjustly downplayed. In an otherwise insightful article on the complexities of national identity in the region, Neil Partrick questions if Arab nationalism in the Gulf "was ever much more than financial generosity and exceptional and well-managed Palestinian solidarity demonstrations." [31] No understanding of territorial identity would be complete without acknowledging that these identities emerged in contention with Arab nationalism. It also must be recognized that Arab nationalist movements were able to bridge many of the communalist cleavages that subsequently flourished under state-sponsored patriotism. A new approach to the study of Arab nationalism is thus vital in order to secure its recognition as a formative stage in the evolution of political identity in the region.

Nationalism in the Arab World

The lack of theoretical approaches to nationalism is by no means confined to Gulf studies, for it also characterizes scholarship on nationalism in the wider Arab world. Rashid Khalidi was among the first to highlight the failure of Middle East scholars to "analyze the Arab case using methodologies derived from the more critical recent approaches in the study of nationalism."[32] Jankowski and Gershoni echo this point in their edited volume that seeks to address this lacuna.[33] Gershoni argues that much literature on Arab nationalism, particularly that from the 1950s and 1960s, adopts an ideational, "diffusionist" approach. This "old narrative" views nationalism as an ideology imported from Europe by elites and thence disseminated among the populace. It thus focuses on analyzing the writings of nationalist ideologues.[34]

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[31] Neil Partrick, "Nationalism in the Gulf States," Research Paper, Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalization in the Gulf States (2009), 29.
[32] Rashid Khalidi, "Arab Nationalism: Historical Problems in the Literature," *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 5 (Dec 1991), 1364.
[33] James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, introduction to *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, ed. James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), x-xv.
[34] Israel Gershoni, "Rethinking the Formation of Arab Nationalism in the Middle East, 1920-1945: Old and New Narratives," in Jankowski and Gershoni, *Rethinking Nationalism*, 5-10.

Gershoni holds that in the 1970s and 1980s, the old narrative began to be superseded by a new version that conceives of nationalism as "a multidimensional historical movement closely connected with social and economic changes." The history of ideas approach gave way to "the 'new' social history of the Annales school, together with the 'political economy' and 'world-system' theories." Rather than focusing on nationalist thinkers and elites, a wide array of classes, social movements, and institutions were incorporated into the analysis. Nationalism theory, "although not always tapped directly, provided a general theoretical background" for this "new narrative."[35]

Writing a number of years later, Behar challenges Gershoni's assertion that the ideational approach has been superseded, arguing that the gap between Middle East studies and nationalism theory remains prominent. Assessing the literature of the "new narrative," he argues that "ideational factors in these new studies outweigh political, economic, or social factors."[36] The field remains "dominated by narrative historians" who fail "to introduce… a guiding theoretical or conceptual framework" for their research. Definitions for "key terms such as 'nation,' 'nationalism,'" etc. are rarely provided, resulting in the lack of common points of reference that provide the basis for comparative, cross-regional study.[37]

Behar's argument regarding the tenacity of the history of ideas approach and a reluctance to adopt new theoretical approaches holds true for a significant portion of contemporary scholarship on nationalism in the Arab world. This is the case even in works that seek to incorporate nationalism theory, as in Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski's study of the shift from Egyptian to "supra-Egyptian nationalism" in the

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[35] Ibid., 11-13.
[36] Moshe Behar, "Do Comparative and Regional Studies of Nationalism Intersect?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37, no. 4 (Nov 2005), 598.
[37] Ibid., 601-602, 606-607.

1930s and 1940s.[38] In a promising introductory chapter, various social and political developments are cited for this shift. However, the remainder of the book takes the form of a survey of the writings of various thinkers and activists.

While the integration of nationalism theory into the study of the region can definitely be furthered, over the last two decades there has been much progress in the adoption of more developed theoretical frameworks. An examination of this literature reveals two broad tendencies: one that emphasizes the role of the state in identity formation, and another that takes a bottom-up approach, stressing the role of subaltern and popular forces. The first approach shares much in common with the theory of Eric Hobsbawm, occasionally cited in these works, in which nationalist "traditions" are invented by elites as instruments to ensure the subservience of the masses.[39]

An example of a work within this genre is Eric Davis's study of the production of nationalist ideologies in Iraq. Drawing on Gramsci, he argues that successive governments have confronted this task through the manipulation of popular "historical memory." He denies that this is a "top-down process," arguing that "cultural production… [is] an important domain of struggle" between the state and opposition forces.[40] However, the state, with its abundant resources, is at an advantage in this struggle, and receives the majority of attention in the book. Another work within the state-focused genre is that of Joseph Massad, which employs a Foucauldian framework to argue that Jordanian nationalism was manufactured by the colonial state through legislation and the military. Massad does not maintain a place for popular resistance to the official nation-building project, arguing that even the realm of purportedly

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[38] Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[39] Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition,* ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 268, 303.
[40] Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 21.

traditional culture has been thoroughly shaped by the state.[41] Nationalism, in this point of view, is little more than a tool wielded by the elite to deceive an unwitting populace.

The state-focused current within the literature on nationalism in the Arab world has come to be eclipsed by another that highlights the agency of popular and subaltern actors in nation building. Emerging "over the past decade and a half," this literature can be said to represent the culmination of the "new narrative" identified by Gershoni. It shares with it a social history approach, but goes beyond it in incorporating theoretical insights from cultural history, postcolonialism, and to a lesser extent nationalism theory. This approach seeks to contest grand, homogenizing narratives regarding the emergence of nationalism, instead highlighting the variable ways in which it developed in local contexts.[42]

Rashid Khalidi took one of the early steps in the formation of this approach in his work on the emergence of Palestinian nationalism in the early twentieth century. The study is noteworthy in that it recognizes the need to address the role of subaltern actors, devoting a chapter to Palestinian peasants. It also introduces a more nuanced picture of nationalism, recognizing the existence of overlapping identities (i.e. Palestinian, Syrian, Arab, and Islamic).[43] Shryock's contemporary study on the tribal population in Jordan presents a similarly nuanced, bottom-up perspective. It argues that tribal intellectuals have reacted to the homogenizing nationalism of the state by hybridizing Western nationalism with indigenous identity. The product has been a novel conception of nationalism that posits tribal descent as the basis of the national

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[41] Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).
[42] James L. Gelvin, "Pense´e 1: 'Arab Nationalism' Meets Social Theory," and Fred H. Lawson, "Pense´e 4: Out with the Old, In with the New," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41 (2009).
[43] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

community.[44] Both authors engage with theorists of nationalism, particularly Anderson, albeit to a limited extent.

One of the most important works in crystallizing the new approach, which appeared shortly after the previous two, is James Gelvin's study of nationalist activism within Syria's urban underclass during King Faisal's rule. This activism produced a "discursive field" very different from that advanced by the elites in that it emphasized Syrian over Arab identity, while at the same time sharing many of the same symbols.[45] Gelvin thus argues against the "privileging [of] an essentialized 'Arab nationalism' over all other constructions of nationalism."[46] In order to access this subaltern nationalism, which is not always directly articulated, Gelvin employs a Geertzian methodology to analyze the "collective ceremonies" of the activists.[47]

Since these seminal works were published, scholars of nationalism in the Arab world have increasingly been writing histories from below. Michael Provence follows in the footsteps of Khalidi and Gelvin in presenting a history of the Syrian Revolt of 1925 from the perspective of its rural protagonists. He emphasizes the idiosyncrasy and indigenousness of the Syrian territorial nationalism these activists espoused.[48] Ziad Fahmy argues that Egyptian nationalism was more influenced by colloquial songs, poetry, and plays than by the elite-produced *fuṣḥa* press. He introduces the concept of "media-capitalism" as an expansion of Anderson's "print-capitalism."[49] This new wave of scholarship has thus used novel theoretical approaches to assert popular agency in the face of elites, and local variance in opposition to homogenizing grand narratives.

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[44] Andrew Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination: Oral History and Textual Authority in Tribal Jordan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
[45] James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 141-146.
[46] Gelvin, "Pense´e," 5.
[47] Ibid., 225-227.
[48] Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).
[49] Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

Though the "history from below" approach to nationalism in the Arab world offers much to be emulated, it retains certain shortcomings. The new literature has established that nationalism develops in different ways according to local contextual factors, undermining the previous image of a monolithic Arab nationalism. It also underlines the dynamic and contested nature of political identity. This literature, however, tends to prioritize the local and the idiosyncratic at the expense of the transnational, thus downplaying the important connections between the two planes. Gelvin goes as far as to place the term "Arab nationalism" within quotation marks, suggesting that commonalities of identity beyond a broad "culture of nationalism" do not exist.[50] This view does not take into account the markedly transnational quality of nationalist activism between the 1920s and 1950s, when activists, migrants, and media traversed the region. As has been stated, Jankowski and Gershoni argue that increased Egyptian links with the Arab world in the 1930s were key in the emergence of supra-Egyptian identities. Furthermore, Amal Ghazal demonstrates how Ibadis in Zanzibar and North Africa became drawn into a Pan-Arab imagined community through the medium of the highly transnational Islamic modernist press.[51]

A second limitation within the current literature is that it remains geographically limited to the Arab heartland. Arab nationalism in the Arabian Peninsula, the Maghrib, East Africa, and the Arab diaspora is woefully under studied. Again, the work of Ghazal represents a prominent exception in this regard. She argues that Middle Eastern studies "has not taken into account marginality of geography but rather social marginality in Foucauldian terms."[52] The failure to examine center-periphery relations in the Arab world may partly account for the downplaying of transnational connections discussed above.

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[50] Gelvin, "Pense´e."
[51] Amal Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism: Expanding the Crescent from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean (1880s-1930s)* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
[52] Ibid., 129.

This dissertation will seek to address several deficiencies within the literature on nationalism and political identity in the Gulf, and will seek to enrich the study of nationalism in the Arab world by employing a novel perspective. The literature on Arab nationalism in the Gulf region is characterized by the absence of critical, theoretically informed approaches. Questions of how particular political identities emerged and developed and the social dynamics behind them must be grappled with. Secondly, the study of Arab nationalism in the Gulf remains confined within the framework of the nation-state and/or particular political groups. The transnational dimensions of Arab nationalism as well as its wider impact upon state and society must be considered. Arab nationalism must also be addressed when considering the evolution of political identity in the Gulf. Finally, this dissertation will seek to enrich the literature on nationalism in the Arab world by furthering the incorporation of nationalism theory and employing transnational and peripheral perspectives.

Education & Nationalism: Theoretical Approaches

The final body of literature with which this dissertation will seek to engage is that of nationalism theory, particularly as it pertains to the role of education in the construction of political identity. Scholars of nationalism have long highlighted the role of modern education in its creation and dissemination, though they differ in their explanations of this role. Their approaches can be roughly divided into three categories: top-down, grassroots, and indirect. It will be argued that elements of each are applicable to the case of Kuwait starting with the onset of state education in 1936. The first of these approaches, which is perhaps the most widespread, views mass, standardized education as a primary means by which the state inculcates nationalism within the populace. This dynamic is most evident in Europe, where the rise of modern bureaucratic states often preceded the emergence of nationalism.

Eugen Weber provides a classic example of this approach. He argues that

universal education was a key means by which the French state transformed its isolated, autonomous, and culturally diverse peasant subjects into French citizens.[53] This was part of a larger process whereby Paris asserted its economic and political control over peripheral areas. Centralized state education imposed linguistic uniformity at the expense of the various patois, in addition to a common culture and symbolic repertoire. Moreover, the curriculum was specially designed to instill nationalism and patriotism through subjects such as history and geography.[54]

Nationalism theorists provide more detailed analyses of the motives and mechanisms behind the state's use of the educational system to implant nationalism within society. Most notably, Ernest Gellner holds that states manufacture nations through centralized systems of education. This development is a response to the transition from agrarian to industrial society. In the former, literate "high culture" is the preserve of an elite minority.[55] Industrialization, however, necessitates a fluid division of labor, in which people are no longer confined to specialized socioeconomic roles. It is now vital to the state that the populace be literate and culturally homogenous, and that men become "modular," i.e. able to serve various functions. The state engineers this situation by inculcating its subjects with the same vernacular language and "high culture" via the educational system.[56] It is when the same high culture "[pervades] entire populations and not just elite minorities" that nations are born.[57] Nationalism, in short, is "the organization of human groups into large, centrally educated, culturally homogenous units."[58]

Gellner's paradigm has two key shortcomings that limit its applicability to nationalism in the Arab world. The first is its deterministic, one-track approach that

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[53] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977), 303.
[54] Ibid., 310-314, 333-337.
[55] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 9-13.
[56] Ibid., 31-35.
[57] Ibid., 54.
[58] Ibid., 34.

holds nationalism to be the product of industrialization. Several scholars have faulted Gellner on this basis, pointing to the fact that nationalism preceded industrialization in many cases, including the Arab countries.[59] Secondly, as Smith and Conversi point out, Gellner's conception of "high culture" essentially refers to vernacular language.[60] It is the need for a shared medium of communication that leads states to engender universal literacy through mass education. The nation is a linguistically defined unit. Though nationalists claim to preserve "putative folk cultures," these trappings are in fact largely "invented."[61] This process of vernacularization, which lies at the heart of Gellner's paradigm, is absent from the Arab case. In fact, Gellner cites the continued utility of Islamic high culture (i.e. the Arabic language) in the modern world as the primary reason why, in his opinion, Muslim countries would fail to develop secular nationalism.[62]

The second broad approach to explaining the role of education in the fostering of nationalism adopts a grassroots perspective, examining how students and educators formulate national identities independently of or in opposition to state authority. Partha Chatterjee argues that the crucial difference between the Western and anti-colonial variants of nationalism is that the latter first emerges in the cultural or "spiritual domain" (i.e. religion, literature, the arts) before asserting itself politically. As the "material domain" is controlled by the Western colonizer, "nationalism declares the domain of the spiritual its sovereign territory and refuses to allow the colonial power to intervene in that domain." Once this is achieved, the nationalists proceed "to fashion a 'modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western."[63] Educational institutions

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[59] John Breuilly, "Approaches to Nationalism," in *Mapping the Nation*, Gopal Balakrishnan ed. (London: Verso with New Left Review, 1996), 162; Daniele Conversi, "Homogenization, Nationalism, and War: Should we Still Read Ernest Gellner?" *Nations and Nationalism* 13, no. 3 (2007), 28; Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Duckworth, 1971), 122.
[60] Smith, *Theories,* 143; Conversi, 376.
[61] Gellner, 56.
[62] Ibid., 78.
[63] Chatterjee, 6.

are key sites where this process unfolds, as Chatterjee demonstrates in the case of Bengal. Around the turn of the century, a network of newly established indigenous schools "outside the influence of… the colonial state," along with the increasingly independent University of Calcutta, played an important role in the modernization of indigenous culture.[64] The colonial state allows for greater independence in this ostensibly apolitical field, providing a space where nationalists can develop and disseminate their ideology without provoking the authorities.

A second scholar who adopts a grassroots perspective is Benedict Anderson, who holds that the shared foundational experience of education can give rise to a common national identity. This is one among multiple mechanisms for the emergence of nationalism that Anderson identifies. He points out that religious pilgrimages such as the hajj reify the unity of the faith, bringing diverse people together to recognize their common identity. A similar effect, he argues, is produced by "secular pilgrimages" such as working within a government administration, or studying at the same school.[65] For example, natives of the Dutch East Indies could only pursue higher education in a few centrally located institutions. This led to the intermixing of students of various religions and ethnicities from across the archipelago, who all "read the same books and [did] the same sums." A shared identity, later dubbed "Indonesian," therefore began to emerge within this educated class.[66] A similar process occurred in the French colonies of West Africa and Indochina, where centrally located schools brought together the elites of the various territories within these respective regions. Anderson attributes the rise of pan-West African and pan-Indochinese nationalisms to this process.[67] Colonial education thus fosters nationalism in a fashion that is not anticipated by the colonizing power.

A third trend within the scholarship adopts a social approach to explaining the

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[64] Ibid., 9.
[65] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, New York: Verso, 2006), 53-55.
[66] Ibid., 121-122.
[67] Ibid., 123-131.

link between education and nationalism, arguing that the rise of modern education in developing countries produces a new social group that becomes the primary constituency for nationalist movements. In this conception, the social effect of education and its broad modernist orientation matter more than the specific ideological or linguistic content of the curriculum. While some scholars adopt a class-based perspective,[68] others emphasize the role of modern education in imparting a radically new worldview to its subjects, as described by Anthony Smith:

> This novel type of education is radically opposed to the traditional elite or folk varieties. It stresses secular, utilitarian values, is linguistic in form, relates individuals through sets of shared symbols, and transmits memories and experiences to posterity… It opens up undreamt of vistas, subjects all ideas to the tests of reason and observation, and endows individuals with a new status and sense of identity. It replaces precedent and myth and custom by the habit of critical inquiry, technical efficiency and professional expertise.[69]

This shift in worldview is held to have far-reaching social and political implications.

An early exemplar of this approach is modernization theory, whose basic premise holds that traditional societies undergo a wholesale process of modernization as they are incorporated into the Western market economy. This entails a number of drastic changes, such as urbanization and industrialization, that undermine traditional sociopolitical institutions and cast society into a state of disarray, from which a new order is then formed.[70] The traditional elites are not equipped to deal with this situation, and are hence opposed and eventually supplanted by those "exposed… to the impact of modern education and urban life."[71] These are variously described as "marginal men,"[72] "new men,"[73] or simply the intelligentsia. They are distinguished above all by a dynamic, secular frame of mind and a desire for progress that sets them apart from their

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[68] Smith, *Theories,* 58.
[69] Ibid., 87-88.
[70] Karl Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Participation," in *Political Development and Social Change*, ed. Jason Finkle and Richard Gable (New York: John Wiley, 1966), 385-386.
[71] Ibid., 390-392.
[72] Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (London: Glencoe Collier Macmillan, 1958), 26.
[73] Stephen Duguid, "A Biographical Approach to the Study of Social Change in the Middle East: Abdullah Tariki as a New Man," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 1, no. 3 (Jul 1970).

hidebound traditional societies. Nationalism is an expression of this outlook, its ethnic component the result of "ambivalence" towards the passing of traditional society and the adoption of modern Western values. Once empowered, the intelligentsia presides over society's transition from tradition to modernity, establishing a Westernized, democratic state.[74]

Although modernization theory is largely outmoded, Smith argues that its model of the intelligentsia remains relevant. He rejects the theory's simplistic, clear-cut division between the traditional and the modern, and the idea that modernity is an "end-state" which developing societies are bound to reach.[75] However, he holds that as subjective concepts, tradition and modernity stand at the foundations of the intelligentsia's worldview.[76] Moreover, the intelligentsia has been key to the emergence of all nationalist movements.[77] Building on modernization theory, Smith defines the intelligentsia as "all who possess some form of further or higher education and use their educational diplomas to gain a livelihood through vocational activity."[78] It should not be seen as a class but as "a 'stratum,' because [the members of the intelligentsia] are socially similar in work situation, education and perhaps life-styles, rather than in property or relation to the means of production."[79]

The intelligentsia is the product of the secular mass education instated by the "scientific" or "bureaucratic state."[80] Arising in the West, this state model was emulated across the globe due to its sheer efficiency. It is dependent on the expertise of the intelligentsia, but is initially dominated by traditional elites and/or "old hierarchical bureaucrats."[81] The intelligentsia's rational outlook and meritocratic values predispose

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[74] Smith, *Theories,* 89-96.
[75] Ibid., 96-99.
[76] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 153.
[77] Smith, *Theories*, 87, 136.
[78] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 108.
[79] Ibid., 111.
[80] Smith, *Origins,* 132.
[81] Ibid.*,* 133-134; Smith, *Revival,* 116.

it to seek upward mobility. Its rise may be impeded by elite opposition, unemployment due to educational overproduction, or social discrimination. Seeing its material interests and its modernist ideals flouted, the intelligentsia undergoes "radicalization," espousing nationalist ideology.[82] It then forms a nationalist movement in alliance with other social groups, and moves to take control of the state.[83]

The triumph of nationalism, however, is by no means certain; a key point that sets Smith apart from modernization theorists is that he does not see nationalism as the sole ideological option open to the intelligentsia. In response to the challenge of modernization, the intelligentsia may resort to the rival "assimilationist" or "traditionalist" currents. The former adopts "a global cosmopolitanism, which denies the significance of ethnic and national divisions," while the position of the second can be summed up in the motto "Western arts, Eastern morality."[84] Smith cites the Narodniks and the Muslim Brotherhood as representatives of the latter. Moreover, considerable overlap can exist between these currents, which can account for the traditionalist elements seen in many nationalist ideologies.[85] Smith thus portrays the emergence of nationalism as part of a multifaceted and contingent process.

The concept of the intelligentsia as the vanguard of nationalism is prevalent in Middle Eastern studies, although the indigenous term *effendiyya* is often preferred.[86] Eppel argues that this term, "adopted from popular Middle Eastern discourse" as opposed to Western academia, is more suitable for capturing the nuances and peculiarities of the regional context. It should not replace social-scientific terminology, but be used in conjunction with it. Eppel grants that "as a popular term… *effendiyya* has

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[82] Smith, *Revival,* 116-121.
[83] Ibid., 128-132.
[84] Smith, *Theories,* 136.
[85] Ibid., 136-137, 242-254.
[86] Michael Eppel, "The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the Growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 30, No. 2 (May 1998), 228.

a blurred meaning that depends on social context."[87] Nevertheless, a brief survey of the literature on this group shows that scholars broadly agree on a number of key characteristics that, while similar to the concept of the intelligentsia, display subtle differences from it.

As with Smith's definition of the intelligentsia, the principal defining attribute of the *effendiyya* is their modern, Western-style education rather than class or occupation.[88] However, while Smith specifies that the intelligentsia must hold higher degrees,[89] the *effendiyya* category encompasses "persons who received a modern Western education at any level (elementary school, secondary school, or higher education)."[90] Students still completing their studies are also regarded as a primary component.[91] It can also be applied to workers who are "technical school graduates."[92] As with Smith's intelligentsia, the *effendiyya* are characterized by a self-consciously modern culture. This is expressed in their adoption of Western clothing, which conspicuously sets them apart from traditional society. Although the majority of the *effendiyya* are engaged in middle class professions, particularly the government bureaucracy, certain skilled workers and sons of the elite can be counted among its ranks. The petty bourgeoisie is also frequently classed as *effendiyya*, though it does not comply with Smith's definition of the intelligentsia as a group that depends on its diplomas for vocational activity.[93]

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[87] Michael Eppel, "Note About the Term Effendiyya in the History of the Middle East," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 41, no. 3 (Aug 2009), 535-537.
[88] Peter Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian and Pro-Fascist Inclinations, 1932-1941* (London: Routledge, 2006), 11, 15; Christoph Schumann, "The Generation of Broad Expectations: Nationalism, Education, and Autobiography in Syria and Lebanon, 1930-1958," *Die Welt Des Islams* 41, no. 2 (Jul 2001), 176, 205; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 11; Eppel, "Iraq," 228, 232; Eppel, "Note," 537.
[89] Smith, *Revival*, 108.
[90] Eppel, "Iraq," 228.
[91] Eppel, "Iraq," 230; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 11.
[92] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 11.
[93] Wien, 11; Schumann, 178-179, 186; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 11; Eppel, "Iraq," 228; Eppel, "Note," 536-537.

The *effendiyya* are also closely associated with urbanization, to which is ascribed the stratum's rapid expansion and increased prominence in the Arab world in the 1930s.[94] A further point, explicitly stated by Eppel but implicit in the work of other scholars, is that the label *effendiyya* is only relevant to a particular period spanning from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, when the spread of literacy and modern schools in the region was still very uneven. The cultural difference between this group and the remainder of society was therefore marked.[95] These nuances conveyed in the term *effendiyya* are lacking in standardized social-scientific terminology.

While the basic attributes of the *effendiyya* are largely agreed upon, scholars diverge in their explanation of the group's political role. It is well established that the *effendiyya* constituted the backbone of the more radical opposition movements that emerged in the Arab world between the 1920s and 1940s. These espoused Arab nationalism but also Islamism, communism, and new territorial and regional nationalisms.[96] Some authors, echoing modernization theory, consider the *effendiyya*'s adoption of these ideologies to be a symptom of an "identity crisis" caused by social dislocation and "ambivalence" towards the West and modernization.[97] Others see the group's espousal of radical ideologies in a more utilitarian light, furnishing its members with a discourse of opposition in their struggle with ruling regimes and colonial powers.[98] A third view attributes their Arab nationalist tendencies to the influence of this ideology within educational institutions in Iraq and the Levant.[99] Modern education also provided the stratum with the sense of being an elite vanguard with an obligation to

[94] Gershoni, 16-17; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 11-12; Eppel, "Iraq," 229.
[95] Eppel, "Note," 538.
[96] Schumann, 174-175; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 14-15; Eppel, "Note," 536.
[97] Eppel, "Iraq," 231-234; Eppel, "Note," 537; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 16.
[98] Gershoni, 16.
[99] Schumann, 192-193, 205; Eppel, "Iraq," 231-234.

liberate, reform, and lead their societies.[100] Usually, a combination of the above factors is cited.

The multiplicity of approaches to explaining the role of modern education in the production and dissemination of nationalism suggests that no "one size fits all" model can be applied to the various regional and historical contexts. Furthermore, it will be argued that in the case of the Arab world generally and Kuwait specifically, a combination of the top-down, grassroots, and social dynamics can be simultaneously observed.

Sources

A primary objective of this dissertation is to balance British archival sources with a thorough use of Arabic language material. The failure to combine Western and local sources has been a primary shortcoming of the literature dealing with Arab nationalism in the Gulf. This can be attributed to the difficulties faced by researchers in accessing this material. As in most Gulf states, official archives in Kuwait are closed to most researchers, periodical archives are usually incomplete, and much material lies in private hands. Most scholars have thus tended to rely almost completely upon British government documents. This is true of the vast majority of English language literature as well as some of the key works written in Arabic.

Apart from the aforementioned party literature, which uses internal documents but is largely descriptive, only a few academic studies have extensively used local sources. Prominent among them are dissertations by native scholars including Al-Mdairis, Hashim, and to a lesser extent al-Rumaihi. Certain local Arabic language works stand out in this regard, though they do not engage with the Western academic and theoretical discourse. Yusuf al-Hijji's biography of the pioneering Kuwaiti Islamic modernist ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-Rushaid is particularly noteworthy, drawing on unpublished

[100] Schumann 174, 198; Wien 16, 34.

documents and periodicals from across the Arab world and Southeast Asia.[101] Furthermore, in the absence of widely read academic journals in the Gulf, professional and amateur historians alike publish historical articles in the press that often rely on Arabic source material.[102]

There is a need for new studies that bridge the chasm between Western and indigenous perspectives. Due to a number of recent developments, local source material is now more readily available to the researcher. Local periodicals are the most detailed and voluminous of this material. A substantial number of these have been compiled and published, but appear to have been overlooked by scholars in the West. The country's first journal, the Islamic modernist *al-Kuwait* magazine (1928-1930), is available in a single volume published by Dar Qurtas.[103] The Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait (CRSK) has republished a number of previously hard to find periodicals, including helpful indexes and introductions. The oldest of these is *al-Biʿtha* (1946-1954), authored by the Kuwaiti student mission in Egypt.[104] *Kazima* (1948-1949) was the second Kuwaiti journal to be published locally.[105]

The organ of the Teacher's Club, *al-Raʾid* (1952-1954), is the earliest of the journals published by the professional and cultural clubs that appeared in the early 1950s.[106] An important source for the purposes of this dissertation is *al-Iman* (1953-1954), which was published by the National Cultural Club and represents the mouthpiece of the nascent Arab nationalist movement.[107] Another of the center's

[101] Yacoub Yusuf al-Hijji, *al-Shaikh ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-Rushaid: Sirat Hayatih* (Kuwait: Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait [CRSK], 1993).
[102] Of particular note are Yaʿqub al-Ibrahim's articles in *al-Qabas*, some of which have been compiled here: http://www.al-ibrahim.org/category/general/wathaeq/ (accessed 13/4/2016).
[103] *Aʿdad Majallat al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: Dar Qurtas, 1999).
[104] *Al-Biʿtha* (Kuwait: CRSK, 1997).
[105] *Kazima* (Kuwait: CRSK, 2001).
[106] *Al-Raʾid* (Kuwait: CRSK, 1999).
[107] *Al-Iman* (Kuwait: CRSK, 2011).

publications consists of a collection of articles from various student newspapers in the 1950s and 1960s.[108]

A recent trend that has facilitated access to Arabic source material is the publication of books that compile articles on Kuwait and the Gulf published in the Arab press. This dissertation has particularly benefited from a collection of articles on Kuwait from Cairo's *al-Shura* (1924-1931), and the reprinting of a collection of special issues on Kuwait from the Egyptian press between the 1950s and 1970s.[109] Furthermore, several journalists have compiled their press interviews with prominent Kuwaiti persons in books.[110] These compilations, along with interviews published in newspapers and magazines, are used extensively in this dissertation.

Original copies of Kuwaiti newspapers have also provided vital source material for this dissertation, though these are much more difficult to access. Kuwait University's Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies (CGAPS) has a newspaper archive that contains clippings from various local and regional publications organized according to theme. Though not very organized or comprehensive, it has yielded useful material. Comprehensive collections of certain periodicals have been accessed at the CGAPS library. These include *al-Taliʿa* (1962-), mouthpiece of the local branch of the MAN, and the government gazette *al-Kuwait al-Yawm* (1955-). The latter contains a record of laws, appointments, government agencies, and other official news. It also published the minutes of certain departmental meetings in the 1950s, including those of the Educational Department from the periods 1955-1957 and 1960-1961. This dissertation also makes use of individual issues of the elusive *al-Baʿth* (1950) and the

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[108] ʿAdil al-ʿAbd al-Mughni ed., *al-Majallat al-Tulabiyya al-Kuwaitiyya al-Qadima* (Kuwait: Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait, 2009).

[109] Qasim al-Ruwais ed., *Madha fi al-Kuwait? Waraqat min ʿIshriniyyat al-Qarn al-ʿIshrin al-Miladi* (Beirut: Jadawel, 2015); ʿAli al-Raʾis ed., *al-Kuwait fi al-Sahafa al-Misriyya: Bidayat al-Nahda* (Kuwait: Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait, 2014).

[110] Yusuf al-Shihab, *Rijal fi Tarikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. 1 (Kuwait: Wizarat al-Iʿlam, 2010); Y. al-Shihab, *Rijal fi Tarikh al-Kuwait*, Vol.3 (Kuwait: Wizarat al-Iʿlam, 2000); ʿAbd al-Fattah Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar* (Kuwait: al-Markaz al-ʿArabi li-l-Iʿlam, 1982); Milaiji, *Rijal wa-Tarikh* (1974); ʿIsam al-Jamal, *Rihla fi Raʾs Hadha al-Rajul* (Kuwait: al-Matbaʿa al-ʿAsriyya, 1965).

Shuwaikh Secondary School's *al-Yaqza* (1952 - ?). Periodicals used from outside the Gulf include the Cairo-based Islamic modernist journal *al-Manar*, Egypt's *al-Musawwar*, and *Neglected Arabia*, organ of the missionaries of the Reform Church of America in the Gulf.

A second development that has facilitated the use of local source material is a recent increase in the publication of memoires, many of which have yet to be studied by scholars. Various Kuwaiti personalities have written about their experience of Arab nationalist activism, studying in other Arab states, and serving as teachers and bureaucrats.[111] In addition, memoires published by Arab teachers in Kuwait are of crucial importance to this dissertation.[112] Finally, the accounts of Western observers have also been used.[113]

There also exists a hybrid literature that mixes history with firsthand accounts.[114] A particularly important example of this is al-Rushaid's *Tarikh al-Kuwait*, the first history of the country published in 1926. Though the work begins with the origins of

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[111] Muhammad al-Saddah, *al-Tariq: Baʿd min Dhikrayati* (Kuwait, 2012); Ahmad al-Khatib, *al-Kuwait: Min al-Imara ila al-Dawla, Dhikrayat al-ʿAmal al-Watani wa-l-Qawmi* (Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-ʿArabi, 2007); Badr Khalid al-Badr, *Rihla Maʿ Qafilat al-Hayat*, Vol. 2 and 3 (Kuwait: CRSK, 2004); Fatima Husain, *Awraqi* (Kuwait: 2001); Ahmad al-Sayyid ʿUmar, *Dhikrayat Kuwaitiyya* (Kuwait: Dar Qurtas, 1998); Ahmad al-Bishr al-Rumi, *Ahmad al-Bishr al-Rumi: Qiraʾa fi Awraqihi al-Khasa,* ed. Yaʿqub al-Ghunaim (Kuwait: CRSK, 1997); Ahmad al-Saqqaf, *Hikayat min al-Watan al-ʿArabi al-Kabir* (1988); Badr Khalid al-Badr, *Rihla Maʿ Qafilat al-Hayat*, Vol. 1 ([Kuwait?], 1987), http://www.b-albadr.net/live.html (accessed 4/12/2012); Hamad al-Rujaib, *Musafir fi Sharayin al-Watan* (Kuwait: Ministry of Information, nd); Khalid Sulaiman al-ʿAdsani, *Mudhakkirat Khalid Sulaiman al-ʿAdsani*, Unpublished Memoire, http://adsanee.8m.com/ (accessed 5/22/2009).

[112] Muhammad Diyab al-Musa, *Sira ʿala Darb al-Masira* (Sharjah: Daʾirat al-Thaqafa wa-l-Iʿlam, 2008); Rabiha al-Dajani al-Miqdadi, *Rihlati maʿ al-Zaman* (Beirut: 2000); Khayri Abu al-Jubayn, *Qissat Hayati fi Falastin wa-l-Kuwait* (Amman: Dar al-Shuruq, 2002); Hafiz Wahba, *Khamsun ʿAman fi Jazirat al-ʿArab* (Egypt: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa-Awladuh, 1960); Ahmad al-Shirbasi, *Ayyam al-Kuwait* (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-ʿArabi, 1953); Faisal al-ʿAzma, *Fi Bilad al-Luʾluʾ* (Damascus: Ittihad al-Shabab al-ʿArabi bi-Dimashq, 1945).

[113] Alan Villiers, *Sons of Sindbad* (London: Arabian Publishing, 2010); Peter Lienhardt, *Disorientations, A Society in Flux: Kuwait in the 1950s* (Reading: Ithaca, 1993); H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait And Her Neighbors* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956); C. Stanley G. Mylrea, "Kuwait Before Oil: Memoirs of Dr. C. Stanley G. Mylrea, Pioneer Medical Missionary of the Arabian Mission, Reformed Church in America" (Unpublished manuscript, 1951).

[114] ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-Rushaid, *Tarikh al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: Dar Qurtas, 1999); Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi, *al-Multaqatat: Hikam wa-Fiqh wa-Adab wa-Taraʾif* (Kuwait: 1998); al-Qinaʿi, *Safahat min Tarikh al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: Dhat al-Salasil, 1988); Salih al-Shihab, *Tarikh al-Taʿlim fi al-Kuwait wa-l-Khalij Ayyam Zaman,* Vol. 2 (Kuwait: Matbaʿat Hukumat al-Kuwait, 1988); S. al-Shihab, *Tarikh al-Taʿlim fi al-Kuwait wa-l-Khalij Ayyam Zaman,* Vol. 1 (Kuwait: Matbaʿat Hukumat al-Kuwait, 1984); ʿAbd Allah al-Nuri, *Qissat al-Taʿlim fi al-Kuwait fi Nisf Qarn: Min Sanat 1300 – Sanat 1360 Hijriyya* (Kuwait: Dhat al-Salasil, nd); Khalid Sulaiman al-ʿAdsani, *Nisf ʿAm li-l-Hukm al-Niyabi fi al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: 1978).

Kuwait in the eighteenth century, it devotes a great deal of attention to the budding Kuwaiti cultural and educational movement that was emerging at the time of writing. The author, a religious scholar associated with the Islamic modernist trend, was a leading participant in this activity. The histories of education in Kuwait by al-Nuri and al-Shihab are enhanced by accounts of the authors' personal experience as teachers. Khalid Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani's history of the Legislative Council, finally, is largely based on his own memoires and experience as an activist and secretary of the institution.

A final body of local sources upon which this dissertation has depended is the Educational Department's publications. Of all the local material used in this dissertation, this has been the hardest to access. The Ministry of Education has a central library and documents center, and the ministry's Curriculum Authority has a collection of old textbooks. However, these institutions have very little material from the 1950s and the early 1960s. The material discussed below was gradually collected from a variety of places, namely: CGAPS, CRSK, the Kuwait National Library, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain Library, al-Babtain Poetry Library, al-ᶜUthman Museum, and, crucially, private collections.

The Educational Department's annual reports provide a wealth of information on its policies and achievements as well as detailed statistics. These were published sporadically in the early 1950s and consistently from the academic year 1955-1956. The earliest local textbooks were published in two waves, the first beginning in 1953 and the second in 1956. Other official publications consulted include reports by certain educational committees, and the proceedings of the department's annual cultural season and the 1958 Arab Men of Letters Conference.

Finally, one of the most important local sources used in this dissertation are the unpublished minutes of the Educational Council between the years 1950 and 1957,

which apparently have not been used in any published scholarship. Copies of these minutes were taken from a private collection. It has already been stated that the official gazette contains some of the Educational Council's minutes, but a comparison between the published and unpublished versions reveals that the former have been censored. Moreover, the unpublished minutes cover the period prior to the publication of the official gazette in 1954. However, this version does not cover the years 1960-1961, so the minutes published in the gazette have been used for this period.

No matter how much care is taken to use local sources, no historian of the Gulf can do without the British government archives, which contain by far the most substantive accounts of Kuwaiti history in the period under study. Several collections of documents were used for this dissertation, namely: the renowned India Office Records and Records of the Foreign Office, and the less well known Records of the British Council. The latter are housed at the National Archives, and contain detailed information on the development of education in Kuwait and other Gulf states from the late 1940s. As far as can be ascertained, they have been not yet been used in any of the scholarship on Kuwait.

Finally, though not a government archive, the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) archive also provides a wealth of information that has been rarely used by historians (particularly those working on subjects not directly related to oil). It is contained within the British Petroleum Archive at the University of Warwick. The KOC maintained detailed records of local political developments, devoting significant attention to the Arab nationalist movement due to its hostility towards the Western owned company. Often, these reports appear in the Foreign Office Records due to their detail and comprehensiveness.

Chapterization

This dissertation argues that modern education played a central role in the production of an Arab nationalist identity in Kuwait. It examines the period between the establishment of Kuwait's first modern school in 1911 and the country's independence in 1961, when this peripheral shaykhdom experienced far-reaching cultural, political, and institutional modernization on the model of the more developed Arab states. The first chapter charts the beginnings of this process in the first three decades of the twentieth century, when Kuwaiti merchants and ʿulamaʾ established an Islamic modernist movement with strong Arabist inclinations. Focusing primarily on cultural and charitable activity (albeit with clear political overtones), this movement began a process of cultural reorientation away from the Indian Ocean world and towards the Arab states, connecting Kuwait to intellectual and political networks spanning the region. The introduction of modern education was a central concern of this movement, which inaugurated its activities by founding the Mubarakiyya School in 1911. This school and its successors pioneered the importation of Arab staff and modern subjects and organization, thus paving the way for increasing numbers of Kuwaiti youth to continue their education in the metropolises of the Arab world.

The second chapter turns to the 1930s, when a secular, merchant-led Arab nationalist movement emerged in Kuwait, taking over the role of the Islamic modernists as the driving force behind the modernization and development of education. Fuelled by Iraq's Arab nationalist policies, the Palestinian issue, and ties to regional political networks, this movement sought to carve out a role in governance and implement a modernizing reformist agenda. It culminated with the formation of the elected Legislative Council in 1938, which temporarily wrested power from the ruler. It is within this context that the Arab nationalist merchants formed the Educational Council

in 1936, bringing Kuwait's modern schools under state control. Through their Pan-Arab connections, they employed Palestinian teachers who constructed the country's educational system on the basis of the Iraqi Arab nationalist curriculum. This brought Kuwaiti education in line with the dominant trends in the Arab world, where schooling was highly politicized and characterized by extensive intra-regional exchange. At the same time, the number of Kuwaiti youths educated in Arab states, particularly Iraq, was becoming large enough to have an influence within the shaykhdom. After being immersed in the political and cultural life of their host countries and adopting the outlook and habits of the ascendant *effendiyya* stratum, these students returned to reinforce Kuwait's growing Arab nationalist mood.

The turbulent yet formative decade of the 1940s is the subject of the third chapter. Two primary developments shaped Kuwaiti education during this period. The first was the emergence of competition over control of the Educational Department and its ideological orientation. The chapter begins in 1942, with Syrian teachers and a government-sponsored Egyptian Educational Mission serving under a Bahraini director. This administration's ties to Arab governments and continued use of the nationalist Iraqi curriculum led the British to intervene against it, seeking to assert control over education. The British Educational Adviser to Kuwait engineered an Egyptian takeover of the department, introducing Egypt's insular and pro-Western curriculum. This produced a backlash from Arab nationalist elements among the local staff, leading to the curtailment of British intervention. Egyptian control over Kuwaiti education continued for the rest of the decade, though it faced challenges from the rising Arab nationalist current in the schools and the influx of Palestinian teachers after 1948.

The second key development during the 1940s was the expansion of the educational system due to generous Egyptian assistance and the influx of oil revenue. A particularly important aspect was the development of an extensive scholarship program.

The vast majority of students went to Cairo, where they participated wholeheartedly in the city's intellectual scene and increasingly turbulent politics. The centrally important case of Ahmad al-Khatib, who cofounded the Movement of Arab Nationalists as a scholarship student in Beirut, will also be discussed. These scholarships, along with the expansion of education at home, were instrumental in the emergence of a new social stratum in the early 1950s: the *effendiyya*, known locally as the *muthaqqafīn*.

With the onset of the 1950s, the Educational Department gradually returned to a policy of top-down inculcation of Arab nationalism, a development that forms the focus of the fourth chapter. This shift can be credited to the Palestinian educator and Arab nationalist thinker Darwish al-Miqdadi, who became director of the department as a result of his ties to Arab nationalist merchants on the Educational Council. Al-Miqdadi remained in his post for only two years (1950-1952) and faced staunch resistance from conservative elements. However, he succeeded in broadening the department's regional connections and took the first steps towards introducing a national curriculum emphasizing both Kuwaiti and Pan-Arab identities. Al-Miqdadi was demoted to Assistant Director following the emergence of a movement demanding Kuwaiti leadership for the department. Its leaders were members of the ascendant *muthaqqafīn* stratum, which began to assert its influence within the political field and state bureaucracy. The composition, outlook, and political orientation of this influential yet under studied social group will be analyzed. Though initially divided between competing ideological trends, the vast majority of *muthaqqafīn* soon came to identify with Arab nationalism, and took over from the merchants as the leaders of Kuwait's opposition movement.

The *muthaqqafīn* asserted their control over the Educational Department with the appointment of ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, a young Egyptian-educated Kuwaiti, as director in 1952. However, the department continued to rely heavily on staff from

Palestine and Egypt, which reinstated its Educational Mission to Kuwait. Each of these three groups contributed to shaping the department's environment and policies, which became progressively more Arab nationalist. This can be attributed to al-Miqdadi's continued influence, the new revolutionary mood in Cairo, and Husain's increasing espousal of Arab nationalism. Changes to the curriculum reflected this ideological shift. Soon after Husain assumed his position, the department introduced its first locally authored textbooks, which were Arab nationalist in tone. In the academic year 1955-1956, the Educational Department set the foundations of Kuwait's first national curriculum, which made the spreading of Arab national awareness a primary goal of education. Remarkably, Kuwait preceded Nasserist Egypt in adopting this measure. The department also sought to disseminate nationalist ideas beyond the classroom through its program of popular acculturation.

The fifth and final chapter covers the period between the 1956 Suez Crisis and Kuwait's independence in 1961, a time when Arab nationalist influence reached its zenith within the Educational Department. The chapter begins by outlining the decentralized and variegated structure of the Kuwaiti state in the 1950s, which allowed the professional and well-endowed Educational Department to exercise a considerable degree of independence. Under the leadership of the *muthaqqafīn*, it became a bastion of Arab nationalist influence within the state. The department demonstrated its independence during the Suez Crisis, when it broke with state policy and threw its weight behind the popular protest movement led by the Arab nationalist *muthaqqafīn*. In the wake of the crisis, a bolder and more radical brand of Arab nationalism came to dominate the department's textbooks, classroom instruction, and extracurricular and public activities. In early 1959, the department hosted a particularly inflammatory public celebration in conjunction with the opposition, prompting the ruler to crack down on the country's Arab nationalist movement. This proved to be the beginning of the

gradual decline of nationalist influence within the department. It would be further eroded in the lead up to independence as a more centralized state framework emerged, and as many of the department's cadres moved to other state institutions.

Chapter One: Islamic Modernism and the Beginnings of Modern Education, 1911-1930

The genesis of Arab nationalism in Kuwait and the wider Gulf region has received little attention in the scholarly literature. Most studies argue that the ideology was imported to Kuwait in the 1930s as a result of newly formed linkages with the Arab world. Prior to this period, the Gulf states are largely portrayed as pristine traditional societies, far removed from the intellectual trends and political struggles in the Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire. Crystal thus argues that until the 1938 Majlis Movement, the Kuwaiti merchant elite displayed "indifference" towards the broader Arab world. The merchants regarded events in Egypt and Palestine as "foreign news, not something to weigh in considering local matters," and only came to oppose British imperialism and identify with Pan-Arab causes in the 1940s.[1] Zahlan places this opening up to regional influence in the early 1930s,[2] highlighting the importance of the Palestinian issue in the emergence of merchant opposition in Kuwait between 1934 and 1938.[3] Prior to this period, however, she emphasizes that "by and large, the treaties with Britain sealed the Gulf states off from the rest of the world" outside British India, causing them to become "very parochial and inward-looking."[4]

While the Gulf was clearly situated at the periphery of the Arab world and the Ottoman Empire during this period, it was by no means cut off from developments there. In the case of Kuwait, close ties with large cosmopolitan cities such as Bombay and Basra ensured that the cultural and political currents sweeping the region, including Islamic modernism and Arabism, were strongly felt in the shaykhdom. This development can be dated to the first three decades of the twentieth century, during which a new form of

[1] Crystal, 51-52.
[2] Zahlan, *Palestine and the Gulf,* 4-5.
[3] Zahlan, "Palestinian Problem," 1-12.
[4] Zahlan, *The Making,* 20-21.

activism gradually emerged within the Kuwaiti merchant class. These merchants espoused Islamic modernist ideology and focused primarily on cultural and charitable activity. The introduction of modern education to Kuwait was one of their primary achievements.

The merchants' cultural activity was imbued with a profound political significance and transnational character. It is strange that the aforementioned studies would characterize a period that saw the establishment of Kuwait's first modern schools, libraries, charitable association, literary club, scholarships, and magazine as one of "indifference" and "isolation." These developments are rarely mentioned in political histories of Kuwait, perhaps due to a failure to appreciate their political dimensions. Chatterjee argues that the early Indian nationalists first asserted their ideology in the "spiritual domain," in cultural fields such as literature, religious practice, and education, before challenging the British politically. This perspective allows him to date the emergence of Indian nationalism to the early nineteenth century, rather than the 1880s as the standard narrative holds.[5] Similarly, Islamic modernist cultural activity provided the foundations upon which Kuwait's Arab nationalist movement would later be built.

This chapter will chart the rise of an Islamic modernist current among Kuwaiti merchants and ʿulamaʾ in the period leading up to the First World War. It will detail the history of Kuwait's first modern schools, focusing on the role of Islamic modernism in fostering educational links between Kuwait and the wider Arab world. The final section will situate the development of education within the context of a broader, Arab-oriented cultural movement in Kuwait that prefigured the Arab nationalist political activism of the 1930s.

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[5] Chatterjee, 5-10.

The Rise of Kuwait's Islamic Modernist Movement

In the period leading up to the First World War, a growing sector of the Kuwaiti merchant class and some ʿulamaʾ came under the influence of Islamic modernist ideology. In 1911, this nascent movement inaugurated its activities with the creation of Kuwait's first modern school, the Mubarakiyya, followed by the Arab Charitable Association in 1913. Although both projects were cultural, their political dimensions are readily apparent. By 1915, the repercussions of the First World War interrupted the Islamic modernists' activities, though this would prove only a temporary hiatus.

The onset of Islamic modernist activism in Kuwait occurred during a transitional period in the shaykhdom's history. The autonomous city-state had been a nominal dependency of the Ottoman Empire since 1870,[6] but this changed after Shaykh Mubarak al-Sabah seized power in a bloody coup. When the Ottomans sided with the supporters of the ancien régime, Mubarak signed a secret treaty of protection with the British in 1899.[7] Kuwait's transformation into a British protectorate, however, was not immediate and straightforward. Mubarak continued to formally pledge allegiance to the Ottomans until the First World War, when he came out on the side of Britain.[8]

Mubarak also abandoned the longstanding tradition of consultation with Kuwait's powerful merchant class, instating authoritarian rule. He also aggravated the merchants by imposing exorbitant taxes to finance a series of adventurist military campaigns. Merchant discontent surfaced in 1909, when three of Kuwait's most prominent pearl traders seceded to Bahrain in protest. This event proved to be the beginning of a rising current of merchant

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[6] Frederick F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf: The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 21-22, 92.
[7] Ibid., 95-103, 110-111; Crystal, 23.
[8] Anscombe, 130, 137-140.

opposition that provided fertile ground for new political ideas.[9]

Islamic modernism's relatively early arrival to Kuwait is not surprising given this ideology's vast transnational reach between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The headquarters of this intellectual and political current was Cairo, where its principal pioneer, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, left his most lasting impression. His thought was developed by his disciples Muhammad ʿAbdu and Muhammad Rashid Rida. These religious scholars sought to respond to European power by appropriating modern values, "especially rationality, science, constitutionalism, and certain forms of human equality."[10] They saw these values as compatible with true Islam, which they considered to be overcome by tradition and superstition. They argued for a return to the practice of the *salaf*, the pious forerunners, and their ideology became known as *Salafiyya*.[11] The Islamic modernists spread their ideas through the revolutionary medium of the periodical press. *Al-ʿUrwa al-Wuthqa* (1884), published by al-Afghani and ʿAbdu in Paris, and Rida's *al-Manar* (1898-1935) reached a wide audience throughout the Muslim world.[12] Gradually, journals sympathetic to Islamic modernism were established "in virtually every community of the Islamic world,"[13] eventually including Kuwait. As a result, "many communities were pulled together through this web of… press organs."[14]

In the Kuwaiti context, Islamic modernist ideology was combined with elements of Ottomanist Pan-Islamism and Arabism. The relationship between Islamic modernism and these ideologies was complex. In the 1860s and 1870s, the Ottoman Empire increasingly

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[9] Crystal, 21, 24-25; al-Rushaid, 286-292.
[10] Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.
[11] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 129-160, 224-244; Kurzman 4-5, 17.
[12] Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 54-55; Hourani 109-110, 226-227.
[13] Kurzman 15.
[14] Amal N. Ghazal, "The Other Frontiers of Arab Nationalism: Ibadis, Berbers, and the Arabist Salafi Press in the Interwar Period," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 1 (Feb 2010), 106.

sought to legitimize its rule through portraying the sultan as caliph. Under Sultan ᶜAbd al-Hamid II (1876-1909), this claim began to be asserted through organized propaganda. One of the goals of this policy was to secure the allegiance of the empire's non-Turkish Muslim subjects, particularly the Arabs.[15] While often highly critical of Ottoman rule, al-Afghani and his successors defended the caliphate as the last vestige of Islamic unity, particularly in the face of European threats.[16]

The Islamic modernists' stance towards the Ottomans can be better understood by examining their close association with Arabism, which denotes "a variety of political movements and currents among Arabs short of demands for Arab sovereignty."[17] It is thus distinct from Arab nationalism, which seeks political unity and independence for the Arabs. Ernest Gellner's widely accepted definition of nationalism thus maintains that it is "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent."[18] Culturally, Arabism entailed the revival of the Arabic language and literature, while its political manifestation centered on calls for greater autonomy for the Ottoman Empire's Arab provinces.[19]

While calling for Islamic unity and loyalty to the caliphate, many Islamic modernists also emphasized the privileged position of the Arabs within Islam.[20] Some translated these positions into Arabist political activism. Rida notably co-founded the

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[15] Hourani, 106.
[16] Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 36; Mahmoud Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rereading Rashid Rida's Ideas on the Caliphate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117, no. 2 (Apr-Jun 1997), 256-257, 261; Hourani, 112.
[17] Kayali, 10.
[18] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.
[19] Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 56-59, 65-66; Kayali, 8-10.
[20] Ernest Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism,* ed. Rashid Khalidi et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 8-9; Hourani, 150-151, 298-301; Haddad, *Rida,* 257-260.

Ottoman Administrative Decentralization Party in Cairo in 1912.[21] The prominent contribution of the Islamic modernists to Arabist thought leads Ernest Dawn to argue that it was they who provided "the nucleus of Arab nationalist ideology," rather than the Arab Christians as is commonly held. A number of prominent Islamic modernists in fact became Arab nationalists, but only after the First World War brought about "the failure of… Islamic modernist Ottomanism."[22]

The main portals through which Islamic modernist ideas entered Kuwait were two cities with which it had strong economic, social, and cultural ties: Bombay and Basra. The first of these cities was at the heart of Kuwait's long established trade links with India, and had a substantial colony of Kuwaiti merchants.[23] They formed part of a vibrant Arab community, boasting its own schools, printing presses, and periodicals.[24] Some of the first Kuwaitis to receive a modern education were the sons of merchants sent to the schools of Bombay and the Islamic University of Aligarh, an Islamic modernist institution.[25]

Perhaps the most significant Kuwaiti merchant family in Bombay was the Al Ibrahim, which became closely associated with the Islamic modernist movement. The family also owned large estates in the village of Dawra near Basra,[26] and appears to have enjoyed a historic relationship with the Ottomans. A British account holds that ᶜAli bin Ibrahim (d. ~1880), who was one of the first members of the family to settle in Bombay, may have been a pro-Ottoman "pan-Islamic agent."[27] In the early twentieth century, ᶜAli's

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[21] Hourani, 303; Kayali, 124.
[22] Dawn, "Origins," 8-10.
[23] Yaᶜqub Yusuf al-Ibrahim, *Min al-Shuraᶜ ila al-Bukhar: Qissat Awal Sharikat Milaha Bahriyya ᶜArabiyya* (Kuwait: al-Rubaiᶜan, 2003), 76-79.
[24] Muhammad Morsy Abdullah, *The United Arab Emirates: A Modern History* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 107.
[25] IOR/R/15/1/716: Administration Report 1936, 34.
[26] Khalaf bin Saghir al-Shammari, *al-Mustawdaᶜ wa-l-Mustahdar fi Asbab al-Nizaᶜ Bayn Mubarak al-Sabah wa-Yusuf al-Ibrahim 1896-1906* (N.p.: 2006), 77.
[27] IOR/R/15/5/62: Lorimer to Knox, 28/8/1906.

grandson Jasim was one of the most prominent pearl merchants in Bombay,[28] and was known for his extensive donations to Ottoman causes.[29]

On a visit to Cairo in the spring of 1911, Jasim al-Ibrahim became acquainted with the leading Islamic modernist cleric Muhammad Rashid Rida. This was the start of a close relationship between the two men. Jasim had come with the intention of making a large donation to Dar al-Daᶜwa wa-l-Irshad (The House of Preaching and Guidance). Rida was then in the process of establishing this seminary, which aimed to train missionaries and religious reformers. In gratitude for his contribution, Rida proclaimed Jasim the "First Honorary Member" of the institution.[30] Following this encounter, Rida recounts further mutual visits between the two men in *al-Manar* in which he always refers to Jasim as "my close friend."[31] Jasim al-Ibrahim thus provided the Kuwaitis with a direct link with the leader of the mainstream Islamic modernist movement.

A closer source of ideological influence on Kuwait was Basra, through which the shaykhdom became drawn into the politics of the Ottoman Empire. Located a mere 170 km north of Kuwait, Basra had always had close ties to the shaykhdom. From the late nineteenth century, Kuwait's maritime trade revolved around the export of dates produced in the city's environs.[32] The Al Sabah and merchant families such as the Al Saqr, Al Khalid, Al Ibrahim, Al Ghanim, and Al Khrafi owned vast date plantations in the area.[33] Many Basra notables also developed interests in Kuwait. This led to the emergence of a

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[28] Saif Marzuq al-Shamlan, *Aᶜlam al-Kuwait: Farhan bin Fahad al-Khalid* (Kuwait: Dhat al-Salasil, 1985), 96.
[29] "ᶜUdu al-Sharaf al-Awwal li-l-Jamaᶜa, al-Shaykh Qasim bin Muhammad al-Ibrahim," *al-Manar,* March 30, 1911, 195.
[30] Ibid., 192-194.
[31] "Al-Shaykh Qasim al-Ibrahim fi Dar al-Daᶜwa wa-l-Irshad," *al-Manar,* May 7, 1913, 400; "Rihlatuna al-Hindiyya: Shukr ᶜAlani," *al-Manar,* January 8, 1913, 77-78; "Madrasa ᶜIlmiyya fi al-Kuwait," *al-Manar,* March 19, 1912, 228.
[32] Yacoub Yusuf Al-Hijji, *Kuwait and the Sea: A Brief Social and Economic History*, trans. Fahad Bishara (London: Arabian Publishing, 2010), 57-58.
[33] Ibid., 88-89.

group of merchants with feet in both territories. Al-Rushaid described one such merchant, Sayyid Hamid Bek al-Naqib, in the 1920s: "He is Kuwaiti and Iraqi at the same time, as he has houses and relatives in both Kuwait and Basra. He has businesses in both, and ambitions for both."[34] Though slightly anachronistic, this description is equally applicable to merchants during the Ottoman period.

The political implications of the social ties binding Kuwait and Basra are evident in the case of the Al Naqib family, to which the afore-mentioned Hamid belonged. Members of this family, which includes the closely related Al Rifaʿi, were present in Kuwait from at least the nineteenth century. They included ʿulamaʾ as well as prominent merchants.[35] As *sāda* (sing. sayyid), or descendents of the Prophet, and shaykhs of the influential Rifaʿiyya Sufi order, they possessed considerable spiritual authority. They capitalized on this to become one of the biggest landowning and merchant families in Basra, also acquiring strong political connections in Istanbul. Their influence was such that they allegedly orchestrated the deposition of several Ottoman governors of Basra province. The Ottoman authorities looked askance at the excessive strength and independence of the Al Naqib, particularly as they had close relations with other mavericks in the area such as the shaykhs of neighboring Muhammara (a nominal dependency of Iran) and Kuwait. However, the Al Naqib propitiated the Ottomans by acting as brokers between Istanbul and the Arab shaykhdoms in the region, especially Kuwait, which they promised to bring back into the Ottoman fold.[36]

The complex relationship between the Al Naqib and the Ottomans is illustrated in the career of Sayyid Rajab Effendi al-Naqib, father of the afore-mentioned Hamid. Rajab

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[34] Al-Rushaid, 195.
[35] ʿAdil al-ʿAbd al-Mughni, *Shakhsiyyat Kuwaitiyya* (Kuwait: 1999), 48-50; al-Nuri, *Khalidun*, 109-111; al-Rushaid, 194-195.
[36] Reidar Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State: Separatism and Nationalism in Southern Iraq* (Münster: Lit, 2005), 33-34.

was the *naqīb al-ashrāf* of Basra, a title awarded to the headmen of the Prophet's descendents in the various cities of the Ottoman Empire. At the time of Mubarak's accession, Rajab "was becoming one of Abdulhamid II's most trusted agents of influence in the area." As part of his policy of Pan-Islamic propaganda, the sultan sought to use him "to win Mubarak's submission to him, the caliph, by emphasizing their bond of faith."[37] At the same time, the *naqīb* became a very close friend of Mubarak, defending him to the Ottoman authorities.[38]

Rajab's son Sayyid Talib Pasha al-Naqib inherited his political position, becoming an influential Ottoman politician and a leader of the Arabist movement. His ties to Kuwait drew the shaykhdom into the empire's politics of decentralization. Talib preserved his father's pro-Hamidian stance until the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) overthrew the sultan in 1908. Following a dalliance with the CUP, Talib began opposing the central government after it began to strengthen its hold over Basra province. In late 1911 Talib formed a Basra branch of the Moderate Liberal Party,[39] a mainly Arab faction that in early 1912 "merged with other oppositional forces across the empire to form… the Party of Liberty and Entente."[40] Saif Marzuq al-Shamlan, one of Kuwait's foremost traditional historians, states on the basis of oral accounts that Shaykh Mubarak al-Sabah joined the latter party.[41] In addition, the Kuwait-born ʿAbd al-Wahhab al-Tabtabaʾi was secretary of this party and editor of its mouthpiece *al-Dustur*.[42] Like the Al Naqib, the Al Tabtabaʾi was

[37] Anscombe, 108.
[38] Ibid.,
[39] Visser, 38-43.
[40] Kayali, 44, 97.
[41] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 51.
[42] Husain Hadi al-Shalah, *Talib Basha al-Naqib al-Basri wa-Dawruhu fi Tarikh al-ʿIraq al-Siyasi al-Hadith* (Beirut: al-Dar al-ʿArabiyya li-l-Mawsuʿat, 2002), 255-259; Khalifa al-Wuqayyan, *al-Thaqafa fi al-Kuwait: Bawakir, Ittijahat, Riyadat*, Vol. 1 (Kuwait: al-Majlis al-Watani li-l-Thaqafa wa-l-Funun wa-l-Adab, 2010), 76-78.

a prominent Basra-based *sayyid* family with a branch in Kuwait.[43]

In 1913, Talib took a more radical step by forming Jamᶜiyyat al-Islah al-Basriyya (the Basra Reform Society), which called for self-rule for Basra in virtually all fields except foreign policy and defence.[44] He aligned his society with the Cairo-based Decentralization Party, which was cofounded by Rida.[45] He also sought support from neighboring rulers, and organized a meeting in Muhammara in March of 1913 to "amplify the new demands" for radical decentralization. Shaykh Mubarak was among the attendees,[46] and a follow-up meeting was due to be held in Kuwait in November but was cancelled.[47] Kuwaiti involvement in Talib's political schemes thus seems to have been significant.

The particular brand of Arabism advanced by Talib and his comrades can further account for the blend of ideologies espoused by the Kuwaiti merchants. In some respects, it represented a continuation of the Ottomanist Islamism of the Hamidian era, and called for a return to the more decentralized administration of the ancien régime. The Basra Reform Society and its predecessors used Pan-Islamist rhetoric to attack the CUP government for its alleged Turkish nationalism and secularism. It also accused the CUP of harbouring pro-foreign tendencies, referring to its providing of concessions to European companies. The movement ironically portrayed itself as defending the Ottoman caliphate against the CUP and its foreign allies, and saw no contradiction in simultaneously demanding Arab autonomy. Haddad notes the prevalence of this position in Iraq before the First World War, and terms it "Anti-European Arab Ottomanism.'"[48] The close links of Kuwaiti notables to Basra and the Al Naqib no doubt led them to adopt similar views.

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[43] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 18, 40.
[44] Visser, 45-46.
[45] Al-Shalah, 241.
[46] Visser, 45; al-Shalah, 345.
[47] Al-Shalah, 349-350.
[48] Mahmoud Haddad, "Iraq Before World War I: A Case of Anti-European Arab Ottomanism," in Rashid Khalidi, *Origins of Arab Nationalism,* 136-139; Visser, 43, 46-47.

By the early 1910s, the influence of Bombay and Basra led to the emergence of a new activism among Kuwaiti merchants. The chief family in the town to espouse Islamic modernism and Ottomanist Pan-Islamism was the Al Khalid, members of which played a key role in virtually all the early cultural projects in Kuwait. This includes members of the Al Kulaib and Al Khudair families, which are branches of the Al Khalid.[49] Al-Rushaid describes this house as "the pole around which all important affairs [in Kuwait] revolve."[50] The family's patriarch, Hamad, was the leader of the pro-Ottoman faction in Kuwait during the First World War.[51] Members of the family were also among the first in Kuwait to subscribe to Arabic periodicals at a time when most Kuwaitis, under the influence of conservative ᶜulamaᵓ, considered them to be irreligious innovations. The periodicals in question were the Egyptian Islamic modernist and anti-British organs *al-Manar* and *al-Muᵓayyad*.[52] This development has variously been dated to 1902[53] and 1908.[54] The family allowed others to access these publications at their *dīwānīyya*, a traditional men's salon, which served as a forum for Kuwait's nascent intelligentsia.[55] Furthermore, the Al Khalid became known for hosting ᶜulamaᵓ visiting from abroad.[56]

The first practical manifestation of the Kuwaiti merchants' Islamic modernist tendencies was the establishment of the Mubarakiyya School, which will be introduced here and discussed in detail subsequently. That a school should be the first project of this movement reflects the Islamic modernists' belief in the power of "modern science" and its

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[49] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 17-18.
[50] Al-Rushaid, 190.
[51] IOR/R/15/5/179: Note on Kuwait in 1933, Dickson, 11.
[52] Al-Rushaid, 99; On *al-Muᵓayyad* see Ayalon, 47.
[53] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 37.
[54] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 15.
[55] Ibid.; al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 37.
[56] ᶜAbd Allah al-Nuri, *Khalidun fi Tarikh al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: Dhat al-Salasil, 1988), 49; al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid* 15.

ability to bring about a renaissance within the *umma*.[57] It also reflects another preoccupation of the Islamic modernists: the defence of Islam against the threat of Christian missionaries. In 1910, Shaykh Mubarak al-Sabah permitted missionaries of the Reform Church in America to establish a clinic and bible shop in Kuwait.[58] In 1912 they also opened a small school.[59] One of the missionaries recalls that the Kuwaiti populace overwhelmingly opposed their presence.[60]

It is often held that the Mubarakiyya was founded as a direct reaction to the missionary school.[61] However, preparations for the Mubarakiyya in fact began in November of 1911, months before the missionary school was established.[62] This may have been a preemptive measure on the part of the merchants. At that time, the Reform Church already operated a school in Muscat and was in the process of establishing another in Basra.[63] When the missionaries began tutoring several Kuwaitis in English in 1911,[64] the merchants may have concluded that the establishment of a school would follow. They were also probably influenced by *al-Manar*, which "placed particular emphasis upon the necessity of counteracting the activities of Christian missions… through schools that could provide instruction in the duties and doctrines of Islam."[65] In any case, once established, the Mubarakiyya placed itself in direct competition with the missionaries, who referred to it as "the opposition school."[66]

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[57] Kurzman, 21.
[58] Arthur K. Bennett, "The Opening of Kuweit," *Neglected Arabia*, Jan-Mar 1915, 6-7.
[59] Edwin E. Calverley, "Evangelistic Activities at Kuweit," *Neglected Arabia*, Jan-Mar 1915, 8.
[60] Mylrea, "Kuwait Before Oil," 42.
[61] Mylrea, "Kuwait Before Oil," 103; Crystal, 25.
[62] IOR/R/15/1/711/1: Administration Report 1911, 110.
[63] Lewis R. Scudder III, *The Arabian Mission's Story: In Search of Abraham's Other Son* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 245-246, 254.
[64] Calverley, ""Evangelistic Activities," 8.
[65] Umar Ryad, "Rashid Rida and a Danish Missionary: Alfred Nielsen (d. 1963) and Three *Fatwa*s from *Al-Manar*," *IslamoChristiana* 28 (2002), 88.
[66] C. Stanley G. Mylrea, "A Council of War," *Neglected Arabia,* Jan-Mar 1914, 5; Edwin E. Calverley, "An Interview About the Kuweit School," *Neglected Arabia*, Oct-Dec 1912.

The Mubarakiyya School was the product of collaboration between the merchants, who funded the project, and certain ᶜulamaᵓ, who oversaw the pedagogical aspect. The idea was proposed during a commemoration of the Prophet's birthday by the religious scholar Sayyid Yasin al-Tabtabaᵓi, and was taken up by Yusuf bin ᶜIsa al-Qinaᶜi.[67] The latter was a religious scholar who had studied in al-Hasa, Basra, and Mecca.[68] Though his education appears to have been traditional, he espoused Islamic modernism after reading *al-Manar* and other Egyptian periodicals. [69] Al-Qinaᶜi was appointed headmaster of the Mubarakiyya.[70]

The merchants, meanwhile, contributed the funds and formed a permanent committee to oversee the school's finances. The largest donors were Jasim and his cousin ᶜAbd al-Rahman al-Ibrahim of Bombay, and the Al Khalid.[71] The committee was headed by Hamad al-Khalid, with Ahmad al-Humaiḍi and Shamlan bin ᶜAli bin Saif as members.[72] The latter was one of the three major pearl traders who seceded in protest at Mubarak's policies in 1909.[73] The ruling family remained distant from this project with the exception of Mubarak's son Nasir, a blind man devoted to religious learning who played a leading role in fundraising for the Mubarakiyya.[74] Though the school was named after Mubarak as a courtesy, the ruler did not contribute anything to it. Al-Qinaᶜi's explanation for this attitude is summed up in a statement he attributes to Mubarak's brother Jabir: "It is to our benefit that you [i.e. the Kuwaiti people] remain ignorant."[75]

The ruling family's passivity towards education and similar charitable initiatives

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[67] Al-Qinaᶜi, *Safahat*, 43-44.
[68] Najat ᶜAbd al-Qadir al-Jasim, *al-Shaykh Yusuf bin ᶜIsa al-Qinaᶜi: Dawruhu fi al-Hayat al-Ijtimaᶜiyya wa-l-Siyasiyya fi al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: 2007), 17-20.
[69] Ibid., 22.
[70] Al-Qinaᶜi, *Safahat,* 45.
[71] Ibid., 43-44.
[72] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 45; al-Nuri, *Khalidun,* 51-52.
[73] Al-Rushaid, 286.
[74] Ibid., 115, 319-320; al-Qinaᶜi, *Safahat,* 44.
[75] Al-Qinaᶜi, *Safahat,* 36; see also al-Rushaid, 313-315.

contrasted with the merchants' increasing penchant for this activity. Al-Qinaᶜi describes this trend within the merchant class as novel and unprecedented,[76] and it possibly reflected new ideological influences. The Mubarakiyya School was the first in a series of projects, focusing to a large extent on education, by which the merchants cultivated a public role as drivers of development in Kuwait town. By the 1930s, the merchants were taking part in the shaykhdom's governance through voluntary elected councils that can be seen as a continuation of this early activity. It has thus been argued that the Mubarakiyya's financial committee, the first of its kind, was the nucleus around which Kuwait's Educational Council later took shape.[77]

Al-Qinaᶜi sought to establish the school on Islamic modernist lines. It opened its doors in December of 1911.[78] The Mubarakiyya's committee wrote to Jasim al-Ibrahim in Bombay, asking him to contact Muhammad Rashid Rida and request that he set out the school's curriculum and appoint its teachers. On March 19th 1912, Rida reported in *al-Manar* that he was honored by this request and that he had written back asking for further details. He would address this matter after arriving in Bombay in April to attend a conference.[79] Rida was hosted in Bombay by Jasim al-Ibrahim, who may have convinced the cleric to visit Kuwait on his way back to Cairo.[80]

Following a short visit to Muscat, Rida arrived in Kuwait in early May 1912 on a visit that had far reaching consequences for the shaykhdom's nascent Islamic modernist movement.[81] Al-Rushaid likens its impact to a revolution, and reports that the number of

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[76] Ibid., 35-36.
[77] ᶜAbd al-Hamid al-Saniᶜ, Interview by Milaiji, *Rijal wa-Tarikh*, 307.
[78] Al-Qinaᶜi, *Safahat,* 45.
[79] "Madrasa ᶜIlmiyya," 225, 227-228.
[80] "Rihlatuna al-Hindiyya," 77-78.
[81] "Shukr ᶜAlani li-Ahl ᶜUman wa-l-Kuwait," *al-Manar,* May 7, 1913, 396-398.

subscribers to *al-Manar* rose dramatically.[82] Rida stayed a week as a guest of the ruler, delivering lectures in Kuwait's main mosque and receiving the town's notables in the evenings to answer their religious inquiries.[83] The British Political Agent reports that the largest of the mosque lectures was attended by "some 1,000 Arabs of all classes," and warned against the dangers of Christian missionaries.[84] One of the missionaries in Kuwait later recounted that Rida urged the locals "to avoid association with us and to make it unnecessary for the people to come to us by themselves providing medical and school facilities along progressive lines."[85]

Not all Kuwaitis agreed with Rida's agenda and welcomed his presence. Certain conservative ʿulamaʾ considered his modernist views and use of the press to be heretical, and went so far as to call for his death. Al-Rushaid claims that Rida escaped an assassination attempt by a follower of one of these ʿulamaʾ during his visit.[86] The conservative backlash caused the key merchants supporting the Mubarakiyya School, including Hamad al-Khalid and Shamlan bin ʿAli, to go back on their decision to have Rida select the curriculum and the teachers.[87] The Islamic modernists' influence within the Mubarakiyya did not end with this setback, and they would continue to challenge the conservatives for control of the school for the rest of the decade. These developments will be dealt with in the next section of this chapter.

Although the controversy surrounding Rida's visit to Kuwait may have marred the progress of one project, his call to counter the Christian missionaries inspired another. A group of younger Kuwaiti men took his advice to heart, forming al-Jamʿiyya al-Khayriyya

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[82] Al-Rushaid, 100.
[83] "Shukr ʿAlani," 398.
[84] IOR/R/15/1/711/2: Administration Report 1912, 113.
[85] Calverley, ""Evangelistic Activities at Kuweit," 8.
[86] Al-Rushaid, 86, 91-92, 98.
[87] IOR/R/15/1/711/2: Administration Report 1912, 113; Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi, "Awwal Mudir Maʿarif Kuwaiti," Interview, *al-Raʾid*, May 1953, 143-144.

al-ᶜArabiyya (The Arab Charitable Association) in February or March of 1913.[88] They were mostly sons of Shamlan bin ᶜAli and the Al Khalid family, the very same merchants who had opposed modernizing the Mubarakiyya.[89] This marks a generational division within these merchant families between the modernist-inclined youth and their more conservative seniors. The British Political Agent reported that the association "was not received very favourably by the elders of the town who said that they should have been consulted."[90] The association's president was Farhan al-Khalid.[91] An avid reader of journals and books, Farhan was an admirer of the Egyptian politician Mustafa Kamil, sharing with him his Pan-Islamic, pro-Ottoman orientation.[92] The association also received support from Shaykh Nasir al-Mubarak al-Sabah and ᶜAbd Allah Khalaf Duhayyan, a prominent Kuwaiti cleric with modernist sympathies.[93]

The main goals listed in the Arab Charitable Association's charter were: (a) providing scholarships "to Islamic universities in the advanced Arab lands like Egypt, Beirut, and Damascus"; (b) employing a Muslim preacher; and (c) appointing a Muslim doctor and pharmacist to provide free healthcare to the poor.[94] Although the association's surviving documents do not mention countering Christian missionaries, al-Nuri holds that this was in fact its aim.[95] The missionaries themselves also held this impression.[96] The association also engaged in missionary activity of its own, converting a number of local Jews and Christians.[97]

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[88] IOR/R/15/1/711/3: Administration Report 1913, 126; al-Rushaid, 122; al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 36.
[89] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 36-37.
[90] IOR/R/15/1/711/3: Administration Report 1913, 127.
[91] Al-Rushaid, 121-122.
[92] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 48-50.
[93] Al-Rushaid, 122.
[94] Al-Rushaid, 122; al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 58.
[95] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 57.
[96] Calverley, ""Evangelistic Activities," 9; Mylrea, "Kuwait Before Oil," 101-102.
[97] Calverley, ""Evangelistic Activities," 9; al-Rushaid, 123.

Owing to its short lifespan, the association only carried out clauses (b) and (c) of its program. Soon after its founding, it engaged the Mauritanian Islamic modernist cleric Muhammad Amin al-Shinqiti as a preacher.[98] He arrived to Kuwait from Zubair near Basra, where he had been an imam,[99] and began preaching at a mosque and giving literacy lessons at the Arab Charitable Association's headquarters.[100] The association also opened a dispensary staffed by a doctor and pharmacist, both Turks who were brought in from Basra.[101] Several Kuwaiti youth, including Sultan al-Kulaib and ᶜAbd al-Hamid al-Saniᶜ, volunteered to nurse the patients.[102] A final achievement of the association, which was not listed in its program, was the establishment of Kuwait's first public library. It was endowed with subscriptions to a number of Arabic journals.[103]

The Arab Charitable Association appears to have had Arabist sympathies, which is unsurprising given its ties to Rida. Badr al-Mutairi argues that an Arabist orientation is the best explanation for the association's use of the label "Arab" as opposed to "Islamic" in its name.[104] Al-Shamlan, furthermore, speculates that Farhan al-Khalid had ties to Talib al-Naqib's branch of the Liberty and Entente Party given his frequent visits to Basra on business.[105] The association did indeed have close ties to Basra, distributing literature there and advertising its activities in the city's press.[106] Moreover, ᶜAbd al-Hamid al-Saniᶜ, one of the association's volunteers, later stated in an interview that Talib's campaign for

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[98] Al-Rushaid, 100, 123; On his background and Islamic modernist connections see: ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Dulaishi al-Khalidi, *al-Shaykh Muhammad Amin al-Shinqiti: Hayatih, Mudhakiratih, wa-ᶜIlaqatih bi-Muluk wa-Shuyukh al-Jazira al-ᶜArabiyya* (Beirut: al-Dar al-ᶜArabiyya li-l-Mawsuᶜat, 2008) 83-85, 89, 91, 144, 269-270.
[99] Al-Khalidi, 92-93.
[100] Al-Rushaid, 100; al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 45.
[101] IOR/R/15/1/711/3: Administration Report 1913, 126-127; al-Rushaid, 123; al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 44.
[102] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 78; al-Nuri, *Khalidun,* 36.
[103] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 45.
[104] Badr Nasir al-Mutairi, *al-Jamᶜiyya al-Khayriyya al-ᶜArabiyya wa-Bawakir al-Nahda al-Haditha fi al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: CRSK, 1998), 62-63.
[105] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 51.
[106] Ibid., 38-39.

decentralization in Basra had a profound impact on him and other Kuwaiti youth. He recounts that it led himself and two of his friends, Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani and ᶜAbd al-Rahman Khalaf al-Naqib, to espouse Arab nationalism prior to the First World War. They did so secretly because nationalist views were deemed un-Islamic, and chose to support neither the British nor the Turks after the war broke out.[107] At least one member of the association thus went beyond Arabism to adopt full-fledged nationalism, though the association as a whole was pro-Ottoman.

A number of factors combined to cut short the experiment of the Arab Charitable Association. One was the departure of Farhan al-Khalid to Bombay for medical treatment and his untimely death in December of 1913.[108] A second was opposition from religious conservatives.[109] The chief factor, however, was Mubarak's adoption of a pro-British stance in the run up to the First World War. This led him to close the association's clinic and expel its Turkish doctor in October 1913.[110]

The shaykh's support for the British did not go unopposed; as stated earlier, a faction of pro-Ottoman merchants emerged under the leadership of Hamad al-Khalid. A missionary present at the time recalls that "there was a good deal of anti-British agitation in Kuwait."[111] Al-Shinqiti, who stayed on after the Arab Charitable Association was closed, instigated a dispute between Mubarak and his Ottomanist opponents in 1915. During that year a revolt erupted against the shaykh of Muhammara, a close ally of Mubarak who was also aiding the British. When Mubarak sought men to help quell the uprising, al-Shinqiti urged the people of Kuwait to refrain from fighting fellow Muslims. Hafiz Wahba, an Egyptian teacher at the Mubarakiyya School, supported his call. One account holds that a

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[107] Al-Saniᶜ, Interview by Milaiji, 310.
[108] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 19.
[109] Ibid., 38-39.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Mylrea, "Kuwait Before Oil," 61.

Turkish teacher at the Mubarakiyya, Sayyid ᶜUmar ᶜAsim al-Izmiri, was also involved.[112] The Kuwaitis complied with this appeal and refused to fight.[113]

This rare act of opposition to the ruling family and the British points to the increasing impact of modern political ideology on the Kuwaiti populace. Al-Rushaid highlights the novel character of this mutiny, describing the reaction of Mubarak's son Jabir upon hearing that the men would not fight: "[He] was confounded by this surprising response, and he had the right to be confounded, for this [event] was exceptional for Kuwait, and the likes of it had not occurred since [the town] was established."[114] Mubarak was infuriated, but retreated from his earlier intention, claiming he was only sending ships to transport the shaykh of Muhammara's family and property. He confronted al-Shinqiti and Wahba in the presence of the British Political Agent, and the two protested their innocence. Suspecting punishment, al-Shinqiti fled Kuwait to Zubair.[115] Mubarak also punished the Kuwaiti ringleaders of the mutiny, who are not named in any accounts of the incident.[116]

The British Political Agent's version of events differs from the Arabic sources. He states: "it was suspected that… [al-Shinqiti] was preaching a jehad within Kuwaiti territory."[117] The Ottoman ᶜulamaᵓ and Shiᶜi clergy had indeed declared jihad against the British invaders, and their call received a degree of popular support in southern Iraq.[118] The British version of events is lent credence by the fact that after arriving in Iraq, al-Shinqiti joined the Arab irregulars assisting the Ottoman forces at the Battle of Shuᶜaiba.[119] Some Kuwaitis heeded the call to jihad. Sultan al-Kulaib, son of a branch of the Al Khalid family

[112] Al-Khalidi, 115.
[113] Al-Rushaid, 297-298.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 298-300.
[116] Ibid., 300.
[117] IOR/R/15/1/712: Administration Report 1915, 52.
[118] Visser, 54-55.
[119] Al-Khalidi, 124-125.

and one of the Arab Charitable Association's volunteers, fought at Shuᶜaiba along with his brother Muhammad, who fell in battle.[120] It is possible that others participated but failed to publicly discuss this so as not to incur the hostility of the British and the ruling family. In any case, it is clear that the Arab Charitable Association did much to foster an anti-imperialist current in Kuwait despite its short period of existence.

The outbreak of the First World War brought an end to Islamic modernist activity in Kuwait for the rest of the decade. The death of the authoritarian Mubarak in late 1915 did not bring about much change in this regard. His sons and successors Jabir (1915-1917) and Salim (1917-1921) did not display any interest in education or sympathy for Islamic modernism. This is evinced by Salim's prompt expulsion of al-Shinqiti when he attempted to return to Kuwait in 1919.[121] Kuwait's activists had to wait until Jabir's son Ahmad assumed the throne in 1921 in order to resume their cultural and educational endeavors. Once again, these were inspired largely by Islamic modernism, with hints of new, more secular ideological influences. Before this period is dealt with, Kuwait's earliest modernist-inspired educational projects will be examined in detail.

The Foundations of Modern Education in Kuwait

Had my family schooled me in Egypt or Beirut,
I'd have created wonders to be recalled after I die

- Colloquial poetry, ᶜIsa bin Qatami, ca. 1910[122]

The Mubarakiyya School and the Arab Cultural Association attest to the importance of education in the agenda of Kuwait's Islamic modernist movement. The latter institution, while not exclusively educational, conducted literacy classes, founded a library, and sought

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[120] Al-Nuri, *Khalidun,* 37.
[121] Al-Rushaid, 320-332.
[122] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, *Muhadarat ᶜan al-Mujtamaᶜ al-ᶜArabi bi-l-Kuwait* (Kuwait: Dar Qurtas, 1994), 131.

to provide scholarships to Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus. It is to these Arab metropolises that Kuwait's merchants increasingly began to look when it came to education and culture. The above couplet by a renowned Kuwaiti ship's captain and poet is emblematic of the extent to which Arab education became an object of desire and emulation during this period. This turn towards the Arab world came at the expense of earlier cultural ties with the Indian Ocean world. In 1931 the British Political Agent reported that "India is not popular with the Arabs" of Kuwait as a destination for education.[123] His successor elaborated on this point in 1939.

> India, from… the educational point of view, has, I regret, less appeal to Kuwaiti Arabs than hitherto and their eyes are naturally turned, in these days of what is called "the Arab Renaissance" to the West, to Arabia and the Middle East "Arab" Countries.[124]

Although this realignment culminated in the 1930s, it was a gradual process rooted in the period when Kuwait's modern schools were first established.

The Mubarakiyya School and its successor, the Ahmadiyya, imported teachers from the more developed Arab countries, and modernized their structures and regulations to bring them into conformity with the educational systems of these states. The "Arabization" of education at home led to an increase in the numbers of Kuwaitis studying in the secondary schools and universities of the Arab metropolises. This section will highlight the nature and implications of Islamic modernist influence within Kuwait's first modern schools. It will conclude with a discussion of Kuwait's first scholarships to Iraq in 1925.

As been stated, the Mubarakiyya was founded in late 1911 at the initiative of the modernist religious scholar Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi, and with the support of sympathetic merchants. They sought to counter the educational activity of the Christian missionaries by combining modern form with Islamic content. Although plans to allow Muhammad Rashid

[123] IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1931, 61.
[124] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Fowle, 16/1/1939.

Rida to select the school's curriculum and staff fell through, Islamic modernist influence persisted due to the continued oversight of its headmaster al-Qinaʿi. This influence was strengthened with the arrival of Hafiz Wahba in 1914. By 1915, however, it was severely undermined as a result of the anti-Ottoman policies of Shaykh Mubarak. Subsequent attempts by the Islamic modernists to reassert control over the school failed, causing them to establish a new institution, the Ahmadiyya, in 1921. This marked the beginning of a short-lived golden age for Islamic modernism in Kuwait, during which the quality and scale of education changed significantly.

From the start, the Mubarakiyya had a cosmopolitan character, employing ʿulamaʾ from across the Islamic world who would otherwise not have settled in Kuwait. Modern education thus provided a unique channel through which the Kuwaitis came into contact with new ideas and worldviews. Among the first teachers was Sayyid ʿUmar ʿAsim, a Turkish religious scholar. According to his son's memoires, ʿAsim's membership of the CUP forced him to flee his native Izmir in 1905 to avoid repression. He settled in India. In 1911, he was on his way back to Turkey when he passed through Kuwait.[125] Here, he became acquainted with merchants such as Hamad al-Khalid, Shamlan bin ʿAli bin Saif, and Hamad al-Saqr. Preparations for the Mubarakiyya were then underway, and the merchants convinced ʿAsim to become the *mudīr* (director) of the school, i.e. al-Qinaʿi's deputy. Another of the school's original faculty members was the religious scholar Muhammad Najm al-Din, a native of Lahore.[126]

The remainder of the school's staff was Arab, some hailing from more developed countries where Islamic modernism was prevalent. When it first opened, the Mubarakiyya

[125] Al-Sayyid ʿUmar, 18.
[126] IOR/R/15/1/711/2: Administration Report 1912, 113; al-Nuri, *al-Taʿlim,* 49-50; al-Nuri, *Khalidun* 58-59.

employed two natives of Baghdad.[127] Little is known about these men. The most influential of the Mubarakiyya's early teachers was the Egyptian Hafiz Wahba, who was employed in 1914. In his memoires, Wahba recounts that he was influenced by the modernist thought of Muhammad ᶜAbdu while a student at al-Azhar. His dissatisfaction with the stagnation of Islamic education and opposition to British colonial rule led him to leave Cairo for Istanbul. At one point he mentions in passing that the British authorities detained him, though he does not elaborate.[128]

Upon arriving in Istanbul, Wahba worked for a pro-Ottoman Arabic-language newspaper supported by the CUP, but left after a time because of his Arabist tendencies. He subsequently travelled to Bombay, where he developed close links with Arab merchants, particularly the Kuwaiti Jasim al-Ibrahim. He also went to Delhi where he became associated with the Khilafat Movement. In conjunction with this Islamic modernist and anti-British group, he launched an Arabic periodical that closed down after the outbreak of the First World War. Once again, he briefly states that he was detained by the British in India but does not mention when or why.[129] In 1914, Wahba left India for Basra, but stopped in Kuwait after hearing reports that the British were again going to arrest him. Al-Qinaᶜi then convinced him to remain in the town and teach at the Mubarakiyya.[130]

Yet another staunch Islamic modernist who taught at the Mubarakiyya in its early years was ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-ᶜAtiqi. Of Najdi origin, he was a resident of Zubair near Basra. After meeting Muhammad Rashid Rida, he decided to study at the aforementioned Dar al-Daᶜwa wa-l-Irshad in Cairo. This he did between 1911 and 1913. He apparently began teaching in Kuwait soon afterwards. In October 1914, he accompanied the prominent

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[127] IOR/R/15/1/711/2: Administration Report 1912, 113.
[128] Hafiz Wahba, *Khamsun ᶜAman*, 5-9, 14.
[129] Ibid., 9-12, 14.
[130] Hafiz Wahba, "Mulhaq Khas ᶜan al-Madrasa al-Mubarakiyya bi-Munasabat al-Yubil al-Dhahabi," Interview, *al-Hadaf*, April 18, 1962; Wahba, *Khamsun ᶜAman*, 12-13.

Islamic modernist and Arabist Muhib al-Din al-Khatib on a trip from Cairo to Basra. Rida had charged the two men with conveying a secret message to Talib Pasha al-Naqib. However, the British apprehended and imprisoned them in Iraq, and it appears that al-ᶜAtiqi did not subsequently return to Kuwait until the 1930s.[131]

The modern reforms implemented by these men entailed changes in both the organization and content of education that demarcated the Mubarakiyya from the traditional *kuttāb*, or Qurʾanic schools. The latter taught basic literacy, rudimentary arithmetic, and most importantly recitation of the Qurʾan. A pupil's studies were completed upon reading the entire holy book.[132] In terms of organization, the Mubarakiyya differed from this model in a number of respects. The school was much larger than the *kuttāb* and its teachers more numerous. It housed 170-180 students when it first opened.[133] Al-Nuri, who started teaching at the Mubarakiya in 1923, reports that the number of students fluctuated between 400 and 160 over the course of a single year, as many withdrew during the pearl diving season.[134]

The key organizational innovation was the introduction of an educational ladder composed of five grades, each associated with specific subjects. Each grade was presided over by a particular teacher, and an oral examination determined the advancement of students from one grade to the next.[135] This allowed the Mubarakiyya to integrate itself with the modern educational system of the Ottoman Empire and its successor states. Graduates of the Mubarakiyya went on to study at secondary schools in Iraq and elsewhere

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[131] Muhammad Burj, *Muhib al-Din al-Khatib wa-Dawruh fi al-Haraka al-ᶜArabiyya, 1906-1920* (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Misriyya al-ᶜAmma li-l-Kitab, 1990), 103-105, 171-176; Badr al-Zuwayyir, *Dhikra Murur Maʾat ᶜAm ᶜala Inshaʾ al-Madrasa al-Mubarakiyya* (Kuwait: 2011), 293; al-Khrafi, 152-153.
[132] *Tarikh al-Taᶜlim fi Dawlat al-Kuwait,* Vol. 1 (Kuwait: CRSK, 2002), 53-55.
[133] IOR/R/15/1/711/2: Administration Report 1912, 113.
[134] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 55-56.
[135] Ibid., 53-57; Sayyid Rajab al-Rifaᶜi, Interview by Milaiji, *Rijal wa-Tarikh,* 49.

at least as early as the 1920s. A British report from 1931 states that the Mubarakiyya was considered to be a primary school.[136]

The Mubarakiyya's curriculum was also modernized, although the Islamic modernists faced stiff resistance from conservatives over this issue. The teaching of profane subjects contradicted the basic philosophy of traditional Islamic education, whose aim was the oral transmission of religious knowledge.[137] The conservatives who had opposed Rida's role in the Mubarakiyya also foiled al-Qinaʿi's attempt to teach English on the grounds that it was contrary to religion.[138] The Mubarakiyya was therefore initially confined to the religious sciences, Arabic, and arithmetic. Although these were basically the same subjects taught at the *kuttāb*, the Mubarakiyya adopted novel teaching methods and maintained higher standards.[139] When Wahba arrived in 1914, he introduced the nontraditional subjects of geography, history, and geometry for the first time.[140] None of the subjects at the Mubarakiyya had standardized syllabi or textbooks, and the way they were taught depended on the discretion of the individual teachers.[141] The nature of the curriculum thus depended upon the composition of the school's staff.

When Shaykh Mubarak dissolved the Arab Charitable Association after the outbreak of the First World War, he also sought to purge the Mubarakiyya of Ottomanist elements. It will be remembered that Wahba cooperated with al-Shinqiti in inciting a mutiny against the ruler in 1915. Wahba's fate following this incident is unclear. Al-

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[136] IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1931, 61.
[137] Dale F. Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Education and its Social Reproduction," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20, no. 4 (Oct 1978).
[138] Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi, Interview by Saif Marzuq al-Shamlan, *Safahat min Tarikh al-Kuwait*, Episode One, Kuwait Television, 1966, http://www.alqenaei.net/sh_yusuf_audio.html (accessed 9/4/2016); IOR/R/15/1/711/1: Administration Report 1911, 110.
[139] Al-Nuri, *al-Taʿlim,* 67-68; al-Rushaid, 114.
[140] Al-Nuri, *al-Taʿlim,* 53; al-Rushaid, 102.
[141] ʿAbd Allah al-Nuri, Interview by Milaiji, *Rijal wa-Tarikh*, 164; al-Rifaʿi, Interview by Milaiji, 49; al-Nuri, *al-Taʿlim,* 68.

Rushaid holds that the British and the ruler cleared him of blame,[142] but al-Nuri vaguely states that he left the country for political reasons.[143] Wahba himself relates that in 1915 he left Kuwait for Basra, where the British detained him for six months due to his political orientation. He subsequently founded a school in the village of Dawra,[144] fiefdom of the Al Ibrahim family with which he had developed close ties while in Bombay. With Wahba's departure, the subjects he had introduced in the Mubarakiyya were discontinued and would not be taught again in Kuwait until the 1920s.[145]

At around the same time, Shaykh Mubarak dealt a further blow to Islamic modernist influence within the school by dismissing its headmaster and architect Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi. The latter provides two reasons for this action. The first was al-Qinaʿi's refusal to allow Mubarak to employ his brother as a scribe, which aggravated the ruler. Secondly, Mubarak accused al-Qinaʿi of harbouring "foreigners" at his residence and voiced suspicion of his intentions.[146] This probably referred to al-Qinaʿi's *dīwānīyya*, which was a center of religious and intellectual discussion that was often attended by visitors from outside Kuwait. Al-Shinqiti and Wahba were also regular participants in this forum.[147] The year 1915 thus saw the disappearance of virtually all Islamic modernists from the Mubarakiyya.

For the next two years the Mubarakiyya was run on more traditional lines. Al-Qinaʿi's successor as headmaster was the religious scholar and teacher at the school Yusuf bin Hmud, whose tenure was short and uneventful. The school's Turkish director, ʿUmar

[142] Al-Rushaid, 299-300.
[143] Al-Nuri, *al-Taʿlim,* 49.
[144] Wahba, Interview, *al-Hadaf.*
[145] Al-Nuri, *al-Taʿlim,* 53.
[146] Al-Qinaʿi, *Safahat,* 45-46.
[147] Al-Jasim, *al-Qinaʿi,* 31.

ᶜAsim, succeeded him.[148] Though ᶜAsim is known to have introduced novel methods for the teaching of Arabic,[149] he was regarded as a traditionalist with no expertise in modern subjects.[150] In 1917 the Islamic modernist presence in the Mubarakiyya resumed when the Kuwaiti religious scholar ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Rushaid was appointed director.[151] Al-Rushaid had studied in Baghdad under the prominent Islamic modernist cleric Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi in 1911.[152] After a year, he travelled to Cairo with the intention of enrolling in Dar al-Daᶜwa wa-l-Irshad, but was for some reason unsuccessful.[153] Alongside al-Qinaᶜi, al-Rushaid became Kuwait's principal Islamic modernist thinker and activist.

Al-Rushaid was unable to reintroduce modern subjects to the Mubarakiyya due to continued conservative resistance, yet his failure led to a new educational project. In 1919, a dispute over pay led al-Rushaid to resign from the Mubarakiyya along with two other teachers. One of them was ᶜAbd al-Malik al-Salih, who had migrated from Zubair to teach at the Mubarakiyya. He decided to found his own school, the ᶜAmiriyya, and convinced al-Rushaid to join him.[154] The ᶜAmiriyya acted as a steppingstone in the founding of the Ahmadiyya School, the Islamic modernists' alternative to the conservative Mubarakiyya.

The establishment of the Ahmadiyya was made possible by the eponymous Shaykh Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, whose rule marked a turning point in political liberalization, cultural activity, and Islamic modernist influence in Kuwait. Ahmad's predecessor Salim had continued the warmongering of his father Mubarak, which had led to popular discontent in the shaykhdom. After Salim's death in February 1921, the merchants prevailed upon his successor Ahmad to form an advisory council, and made him agree that

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[148] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 47.
[149] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 47; al-Nuri, *Khalidun,* 59; al-Rushaid, 118.
[150] Al-Qinaᶜi, Interview by al-Shalman, KTV, Episode One; Mylrea, "Kuwait Before Oil," 103-104.
[151] Al-Hijji, *al-Rushaid*, 66.
[152] Ibid., 32-37.
[153] Ibid., 49.
[154] Ibid., 68.

criminal cases would be judged by the ʿulamaʾ according to the shariʿa. According to al-Qinaʿi, the council was his idea.[155]

Although short-lived and ineffectual, the 1921 advisory council was important in that it was the first attempt by the merchants to formalize their role in governance through modern political institutions. The body was headed by Hamad al-Saqr, who was recognized during this period as leader of the merchant opposition.[156] By the 1930s his family, which had close business ties to Iraq, would become closely identified with the Arab nationalist movement. A significant proportion of the council's members were sympathetic to Islamic modernism. Key among these was Ahmad al-Fahad al-Khalid, brother of Farhan and his successor as president of the defunct Arab Charitable Association. The Al Khalid also fielded a second member, Mashʿan al-Khudair. The *sāda* were represented by ʿAbd al-Rahman Bek al-Naqib, who al-Saniʿ mentioned as one of Kuwait's first Arab nationalists. Also present were the Mubarakiyya committee members Shamlan bin ʿAli and Ahmad al-Humaiḍi.[157]

In addition to the merchants, the ʿulamaʾ were represented on the council by Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi and ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-Rushaid.[158] This marked a boost in their standing and a legitimation of their Islamic modernist beliefs, for they were not the oldest or most prominent ʿulamaʾ in Kuwait. Their appointment suggests that Islamic modernism had become more influential within merchant circles. Shaykh Ahmad may also have had some sympathy for Islamic modernism; he was in communication with the exiled al-Shinqiti during Salim's reign,[159] and after assuming power he appointed al-Rushaid as his court

[155] IOR/R/15/1/713/2: Administration Report 1921, 65; al-Qinaʿi, *al-Multaqatat*, Vol.1, 120-121.
[156] Crystal, 41.
[157] Al-Rushaid, 365.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Al-Rushaid, 332; al-Khalidi, 151-153.

preacher.[160] Unlike his predecessors, he would also play an active role in the formation of the Ahmadiyya School. The advisory council, however, quickly disintegrated due to infighting amongst its members.[161] Nevertheless, it formed an important precedent that the merchant opposition would build upon in the 1930s.

The newfound prominence of the Islamic modernists set the stage for the establishment of a school of their own. Al-Qinaᶜi reports that Shaykh Ahmad charged him with reforming the Mubarakiyya, but that those responsible for the school opposed his plans to teach modern subjects and English.[162] This led al-Rushaid to propose forming a new school to avoid clashing with the conservatives. It would be named the Ahmadiyya in honor of the ruler. The prominent merchants supported the scheme, with almost all members of the advisory council contributing funds.[163] Hamad al-Saqr and Hamad al-Khalid were the largest contributors.[164] Sultan al-Kulaib, the former member of the Arab Charitable Association who fought against the British, played a key role in soliciting donations. Shaykh Ahmad, finally, pledged a substantial annual contribution. As in the case of the Mubarakiyya, an administrative committee for the school was formed. Its members were ᶜAbd al-Rahman Bek al-Naqib, Sayyid ᶜAli bin Sayyid Sulaiman al-Rifaᶜi, Mashᶜan al-Khudair, Mishari al-Kulaib, and Sultan al-Kulaib.[165] It is noteworthy that the first two were Rifaᶜi *sāda*, and the other three sons of the Al Khalid.

The Ahmadiyya School was built upon the foundations of previous Islamic modernist initiatives. It took over the premises of the Arab Charitable Association, donated

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[160] Al-Nuri, *Khalidun,* 89.
[161] IOR/R/15/1/713/2: Administration Report 1921, 65; al-Qinaᶜi, *al-Multaqatat* Vol.1, 120-121; al-Rushaid, 365.
[162] Al-Qinaᶜi, *al-Multaqatat*, Vol. 2, 228-229.
[163] The only council member not mentioned is al-Ghanim. Ibid.; al-Rushaid 118-119.
[164] Al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 14.
[165] Al-Qinaᶜi, *al-Multaqatat* Vol.2, 228; al-Rushaid, 118-119.

by Ahmad al-Fahad al-Khalid.[166] It also merged with the ᶜAmiriyya School, absorbing its students and teachers, including al-Rushaid. The ᶜAmiriyya's headmaster, al-Salih, was made director (*mudīr*) of the Ahmadiyya.[167]

Al-Qinaᶜi became headmaster of the Ahmadiyya, and was finally able to implement the educational reforms he had strived for over the past decade. Along with al-Rushaid, he insisted on incorporating modern subjects and English into the curriculum. The two said that unless they had their way, they would form their own school and hang a sign on it saying "English Language and Geography." They also stipulated that the Ahmadiyya should employ teachers from Egypt who would be "enlightened and modern (*ᶜalā al-ṭarāz al-jadīd*)." Two Egyptians were engaged, one of whom taught English.[168] Furthermore, Hafiz Wahba, who returned to Kuwait after the British expelled him from Bahrain, volunteered his time to the school free of charge. His main occupation was now trade, and he engaged in teaching and preaching part-time.[169] The Ahmadiyya School opened its doors in September of 1921,[170] and al-Qinaᶜi recalls that it was remarkably successful in its early years.[171]

Although the Mubarakiyya's administration continued to oppose curricular reform for the rest of the decade, the school experienced an influx of Arab teachers with experience of modern education during this period. One of the most notable was Muhammad Nuri, a religious scholar from Mosul who had taught at an Ottoman government school in Zubair. A staunch anti-imperialist and opponent of Christian missionaries, his harassment by the British authorities drove him to settle in Kuwait in 1922

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[166] Al-Qinaᶜi, *al-Multaqatat* Vol.2, 228.
[167] Al-Hijji, *al-Rushaid,* 84-85.
[168] Ibid., 83; al-Jasim, *al-Qinaᶜi,* 34; al-Qinaᶜi, *al-Multaqatat* Vol.2, 229.
[169] Wahba, *Khamsun ᶜAman,* 20; al-Qinaᶜi, *al-Multaqatat* Vol.2, 229.
[170] IOR/R/15/1/713/2: Administration Report 1921, 65.
[171] Al-Qinaᶜi, *al-Multaqatat* Vol.2, 229.

or 1923.[172] He was hosted by Hamad al-Khalid and also received assistance from Hamid al-Naqib.[173] Muhammad's son ᶜAbd Allah accompanied him to Kuwait but later returned to study at Dar al-Muᶜalimin, the government teachers' college in Baghdad. The following year he discontinued his studies and assumed a teaching position at the Mubarakiyya.[174]

Another of the school's teachers who attended Dar al-Muᶜalimin was Mahmud Shawqi al-Ayyubi, the son of a Kurdish immigrant to Kuwait. He taught in Iraqi schools for a time after graduating, moving to the Mubarakiyya in 1924.[175] ᶜAbd Allah al-Nuri and al-Ayyubi were apparently the first teachers in Kuwait who were trained at a modern teachers' college. In 1926, an Egyptian Azharite scholar, Muhammad al-Khurashi, arrived from Zubair and became director of both the Mubarakiyya and Ahmadiyya schools. Although he stayed for less than a year, he did much to modernize the organization of both institutions. He departed after quarreling with al-Rushaid, who accused him of being a secret Bahai missionary.[176] While the Mubarakiyya did not experience the same modernizing reforms as the Ahmadiyya, it too experienced an increase in modern influence during the 1920s.

The establishment of the Ahmadiyya was followed by the creation of another modern school, the Saᶜada School for orphans, in 1924. It was entirely funded by the pearl merchant Shamlan bin ᶜAli. The school resembled the Mubarakiyya in having a more traditional curriculum, yet it is also reported to have taught history. It is yet another illustration of the intensification of the merchant's educational and charitable activities in

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[172] ᶜAbd al-Razzaq al-Saniᶜ and ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-ᶜAli, *Imarat al-Zubair Bayn Hijratayn: Bayn Sanatay 979-1342 AH*, Vol. 3 (Kuwait: Matbaᶜat al-Muqahwi, 1988), 43; al-Nuri, Interview by Milaiji, 162; al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 50; al-Khrafi, 125.
[173] Al-Nuri, Interview by Milaiji, 162; al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 15.
[174] Al-Nuri, Interview by Milaiji, 159-163.
[175] Al-Nuri, *Khalidun,* 61-65.
[176] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 65; al-Rushaid, 105-112.

the 1920s.[177]

By the middle of the decade, the standard of education in Kuwait had improved to the point where its effects within society had become palpable. In 1923, the Arab nationalist writer Amin al-Raihani, a Lebanese Christian, visited Kuwait on a tour of Arabia. He reported that it was experiencing a "cultural renaissance (*nahḍa thaqāfīyya*)" based on two pillars, the schools and the Ahliyya Library (to be discussed below). He added that Kuwait was imbibing the modern knowledge of Egypt and Syria, and spreading it to less developed areas of Arabia.[178] In his history of Kuwait, published in 1926, al-Rushaid similarly spoke of an "intellectual movement and cultural renaissance" in Kuwait. It was fuelled by several factors including education.[179] Not only did the schools introduce modern subjects, but they also popularized traditional disciplines such as Islamic jurisprudence and Arabic grammar, "which were previously confined to a few individuals with long beards."[180] Al-Nuri notes that Kuwait experienced a significant rise in literacy between 1912 and the 1930s due to the impact of the modern schools and the increasing number of *kuttāb*.[181]

An important result of the development and modernization of education was that studying in the secondary schools and universities of the Arab world became more viable and attractive. The first Kuwaitis to receive a modern education abroad were the sons of merchants, many of whom resided in India or Iraq. Little is known about the numbers and experiences of these students. Badr Khalid al-Badr, the son of a merchant with family and business ties to Basra, provides a rare firsthand account of his study in Iraq between 1921

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[177] Khalid al-Shatti, *Madrasat al-Saᶜada li-l-Aytam wa-Muʾasisuha Shamlan bin ᶜAli Al Saif* (Kuwait: 2009), 42, 66, 107-108; IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1931, 61; al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 62; al-Rushaid, 114, 119.
[178] Amin al-Raihani, *Muluk al-ᶜArab* (Beirut: Dar al-Jamil, 1987), 676-677.
[179] Al-Rushaid, 98-99.
[180] Ibid., 114.
[181] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 63.

and 1931. He started his education in Kuwait at a *kuttāb* and then joined the ᶜAmiriyya to learn how to write, as the former only taught memorization of the Qurᶜan. Al-Badr highlights the stark contrast between the *kuttāb* and the ᶜAmiriyya, which had an educational ladder like the Mubarakiyya. He states that his education there prepared him well for the government primary school he joined in Basra in 1921, illustrating the importance of modern education in preparing Kuwaiti students for study abroad.[182]

Al-Badr also recounts that Iraq was experiencing a "remarkable Arab awakening (*ṣaḥwa*)" in the mid-1920s. Its effects were strongly felt in the schools, whose curriculum was designed by the Arab nationalist ideologue Satiᶜ al-Husri. He recalls reciting rousing nationalist anthems and poetry, and learning about the history of the Arab nation up to the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans. The teachers also lectured students on the Balfour Declaration and the danger of Zionism.[183]

The increasing appeal of the Arab countries as a destination for study is illustrated by Kuwait's first scholarships in 1925, awarded to seven graduates of the Ahmadiyya and Mubarakiyya schools. The students were sent to Iraq for two years of secondary schooling. Six of them went to the Aᶜzamiyya College in Baghdad, while one, a ruling family member, attended the Rahmaniyya College in Basra. Although referred to as colleges (*kullīyya*), these institutions were in fact secondary schools. Of the first six students, the most prominent was Khalid al-ᶜAdsani, whose father Sulaiman was mentioned by al-Saniᶜ as one of Kuwait's first Arab nationalists.[184] As shall be seen, Khalid would become a prominent nationalist activist in his own right. At least one of these scholarship students,

[182] Al-Badr, Vol. 1.
[183] Ibid.
[184] These were: Ahmad bin ᶜUmar al-ᶜAli, Mahmud bin ᶜAbd al-Razzaq al-Dusari, ᶜAbd al-Karim bin Muhammad Al Badr, Sulaiman al-ᶜAnizi, and ᶜAbd Allah al-Mudairis. al-Rushaid, 359, 368.

ᶜAbd al-Karim al-Badr, returned to teach in Kuwait's schools.[185]

The scholarships were the project of al-Qinaᶜi, who visited the Aᶜzamiyya College and was impressed by it.[186] It was an Islamic modernist institution that, like the Ahmadiyya, combined religious and modern subjects. Its director was the religious scholar Nuᶜman al-Aᶜzami, who had anti-British tendencies and ties to Islamic modernist scholars including Kuwait's ᶜAbd Allah Khalaf Duhayyan.[187] Al-Qinaᶜi accompanied the students to Baghdad, personally paying their travel expenses and providing a financial guarantee to the college.[188] It is unclear who paid the students' fees, though al-Rushaid praises Shaykh Ahmad's support for the scholarships, suggesting that he was responsible.[189]

The scholarships to Iraq represented the culmination of the Islamic modernists' push for educational alignment with the Arab world, and realized a goal first advanced by the Arab Charitable Association in 1913. Along with the other developments in the modernization and "Arabization" of education in the 1920s, the scholarships were made possible by the favorable climate under Shaykh Ahmad al-Jabir. Towards the end of the decade, however, educational development ground to a halt following the virtual collapse of Kuwait's economy. This was due to the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, a Saudi trade blockade of Kuwait (imposed in 1922 after a dispute over the collection of customs duties), and the decline of the pearl trade following the development of the cultured pearl.[190]

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[185] Al-Khrafi, 648-649.
[186] Al-Qinaᶜi, Interview, *al-Raᵓid*, 140-141; al-Rushaid, 368.
[187] Walid al-Aᶜzami, *Madrasat al-Imam Abi Hanifa: Tarikhuha wa-Tarajim Shuyukhuha wa-Mudarisiha* (Beirut: al-Dar al-ᶜArabiyya li-l-Mawsuᶜat, 2005), 24-31, 81-82.
[188] Al-Qinaᶜi, Interview by al-Shamlan, KTV, Episode Two; al-Qinaᶜi, Interview, *al-Raᵓid*, 140-141.
[189] Al-Rushaid, 368.
[190] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 16-31 July 1935; IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1931, 55, 59; IOR/R/15/1/714/6: Administration Report 1930, 54, 57-58; IOR/R/15/1/713/3: Administration Report 1922, 55-56.

As the economic crisis took its toll, merchant funding for charitable and educational projects gradually dried up, and financial support from the ruler remained limited. This led to a marked decline in the standard of education in the Mubarakiyya and Ahmadiyya schools,[191] while the Saᶜada School was forced to shut down altogether.[192] Moreover, no further scholarships were provided until the late 1930s. In the subsequent decade, this situation would lead the merchants to mobilize in order to force the state to take responsibility for education and other aspects of public welfare. Before leaving the 1920s, however, it is necessary to place the development of education within the context of the broader cultural movement that occurred during the period of Islamic modernist ascendancy.

Kuwait's "Cultural Renaissance"

The educational projects of the 1920s were part of a broader flourishing of cultural and intellectual activity. As has been stated, both al-Raihani and al-Rushaid speak of education as part of a "cultural renaissance" in Kuwait that included other aspects. Among them were the establishment of the Ahliyya Library and the Literary Club (al-Nadi al-Adabi) in 1923, and an increasing interaction with Arab intellectuals and the press. The latter development culminated in the establishment of the shaykhdom's first periodical in 1928. As in the case of education, these cultural pursuits were oriented towards and inspired by the Arab world. They were pioneered by the same Islamic modernist ᶜulamaᵓ and merchants involved in education. In addition, the youth began to play a more prominent role, leading to new, more secular ideological influences that contributed to the growth of Arab nationalism. Along with the educational developments discussed above, these activities support Chatterjee's thesis that the cultural realm was central to the

[191] Al-Qinaᶜi, *al-Multaqatat* Vol.2, 229; al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 72-73.
[192] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 62.

emergence of nationalism. Furthermore, they clearly demonstrate that Kuwait's links with Arab world long predate the 1930s as the aforementioned authors allege. The interpersonal networks that connected Kuwaitis to other Arabs during this period would influence the development of education in the coming decades.

The Ahliyya Library, founded in 1923, followed in the pattern of the other charitable establishments created by the merchants during this period. Some accounts credit al-Qinaᶜi with the idea,[193] while others attribute it to al-Kulaib and al-Saniᶜ, the youth of the former Arab Charitable Association.[194] Al-Qinaᶜi was made president of the library, while both al-Kulaib and al-Saniᶜ appear to have occupied the subordinate position of director at different times. A youth of the al-Rifaᶜi family became the library's treasurer.[195] Furthermore, an administrative committee was formed that included Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani.[196] Many of the participants in this project were thus younger men with Islamic modernist or Arab nationalist sympathies. The new library inherited the books of the Arab Charitable Association, and also received donations of books from the merchants.[197] It also subscribed to Egyptian and Syrian journals.[198]

Shortly after the library's formation, a group of educated youth founded the Literary Club (al-Nadi al-Adabi), which represented a radical development for several reasons. Firstly, although more established figures such as al-Rushaid lent their support,[199] the initiative was the first to be led by the youth, who were perhaps encouraged by their participation in the Ahliyya Library. The founders included students, reflecting the role of education in introducing modern ideas from the Arab world. The idea was proposed by

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[193] Al-Rushaid, 123.
[194] Mulla Muhammad Salih, Interview by Milaiji, *Rijal wa-Tarikh*, 12; al-Shamlan, *al-Khalid,* 15.
[195] Al-Rifaᶜi, Interview by Milaiji, 47.
[196] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*; Salih, Interview by Milaiji, 12.
[197] Al-Rushaid, 123-124.
[198] ᶜAbd Allah al-Hatim, *Min Huna Badaʾat al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: Dar al-Qabas, 1980), 66.
[199] Al-Nuri, *Khalidun,* 89.

Khalid Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, then a secondary school student who would shortly be sent to Iraq on scholarship.[200] ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir al-Sabah, an educated young shaykh, became the club's president. Young men occupied the remaining administrative positions.[201] According to al-ᶜAdsani, the club had at least one hundred members drawn from the younger generation.[202]

The Literary Club became a conduit for the importation of the latest ideological trends from the Arab world. These appear to have coexisted with the already established Islamic modernist current, for various Islamic modernist figures were invited to speak at the club. This accords with Dawn's thesis of Arab nationalism emerging gradually from Islamic modernist foundations. Some members of the club already had Arab nationalist leanings, including ᶜAbd al-Hamid al-Saniᶜ and perhaps Khalid Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, who may have inherited his father's views. Others would become nationalist activists in the 1930s. These include Sarhan al-Sarhan, Muhammad al-Barrak, and Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghanim.[203]

The periodical press was vital in the importation of new ideas; the Literary Club subscribed to numerous Arab journals, some of which were donated by the ruler.[204] The club's former president ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir recalls the particular impact of the Egyptian press, listing ten journals that were regularly read by the club members. These had such a hold on the members' imaginations that they divided themselves into supporters of the three main Egyptian political parties: al-Wafd, al-Ahrar al-Dusturiyyun, and al-Hizb al-Watani. The Wafd leader Saᶜad Zaghlul was, he states, as popular among the members as

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[200] Al-Rushaid, 124; al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*.
[201] These include ᶜIsa bin Salih al-Qinaᶜi, Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghanim, and Rajab al-Rifaᶜi. al-Rushaid, 124; al-Rifaᶜi, Interview by Milaiji, 47.
[202] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*
[203] Al-Hatim, 68-69.
[204] Al-Rushaid, 124.

Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir would later become. Moreover, a law was issued requiring members to dress in the fashion of the Egyptian aristocracy: Western suits for club meetings, and smoking jackets for evening functions. Al-Jabir also recalls that the club came to support women's emancipation due to the influence of Egyptian writers such as Qasim Amin, Huda Shaᶜrawi, and Safiya Zaghlul.[205]

A second means through which the Literary Club contributed to the dissemination of new ideas was the hosting of lectures by local and visiting intellectuals. The practice of delivering a lecture in a secular context, as opposed to a religious sermon, was an innovation. Al-Rushaid considers his opening lecture at the club to be the first in Kuwait,[206] and he went on to deliver others.[207] The Egyptian teacher al-Khurashi also lectured at the club in 1926.[208]

The club also took advantage of an increase in the number of visitors from the Arab world, holding receptions in their honor where lectures and speeches were delivered. In the spring of 1924, it hosted al-Shinqiti, who visited Kuwait for the first time since his expulsion by Shaykh Salim in 1919.[209] The following year, the Tunisian Islamic modernist scholar and anti-imperialist activist ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Thaᶜalibi arrived in the shaykhdom as a guest of the Al Khalid. He had been touring the region after being forced to flee his country by the French. According to al-Rushaid, al-Thaᶜalibi's speeches at the Literary Club and elsewhere over the course of his eighteen-day sojourn had a far-reaching impact

[205] ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir al-Sabah, "Rihla fi Hayat Saᶜadat al-Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir al-Sabah," Interview, *al-Kuwait*, April 16, 1972, 5-7.
[206] Al-Rushaid, 124.
[207] Al-Nuri, *Khalidun,* 91-92.
[208] Al-Rushaid, 112.
[209] Ibid., 100; al-Khalidi, 183.

in the town.[210] Al-Thaᶜalibi returned to Kuwait in 1927, and the Saᶜada School held a reception in his honor.[211]

Kuwait received other visitors from the Arab world during this period. Amin al-Raihani's arrival in 1923 has already been mentioned. The following year, Muhammad Amin al-Husaini, Mufti of Jerusalem and President of Palestine's Supreme Muslim Council, arrived at the head of a delegation to raise funds for the restoration of Jerusalem's holy sites. He was accompanied by the prominent Egyptian Arab nationalist Muhammad ᶜAli ᶜAlluba.[212] Al-Husaini was a disciple of Muhammad Rashid Rida, having studied at Dar al-Daᶜwa wa-l-Irshad between 1912 and 1913,[213] and may have established contact with Kuwaitis through the Islamic modernist network. This encounter marked the start of a close relationship between Kuwait's merchants and al-Husaini that would later have crucial consequences for the development of education.

A further development that contributed to the rise of cultural and intellectual activity in Kuwait during the 1920s was an increased interaction with the Arab press, both in terms of consumption and production. During this time, Kuwaiti society apparently abandoned the conservative position that held periodicals to be anathema. Magazines and newspapers were now readily available through the Ahliyya Library, the Literary Club, and Kuwait's first commercial bookshops, established in 1923 and 1926.[214] In 1928, the Kuwait-Iraq Motor Transport Company introduced a much more efficient mail service. Al-Rushaid remarked that it allowed "the Kuwaiti to read the newspapers and magazines of Egypt… three days after their publication, whereas previously they would arrive after ten

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[210] Al-Rushaid, 102-103; al-Ruwais, 48-52; Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 70, 83.
[211] Al-Ruwais, 70-71.
[212] Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1979), 138; ᶜAjaj Nuwaihid, "Mawlana Muhammad ᶜAli al-Zaᶜim al-Hindi," *al-Adib*, April 1978, 2; al-Shamlan, *Tarikh,* 343.
[213] Mattar, 8-10.
[214] Al-Hatim, 71; al-Wuqayyan, *al-Thaqafa,* 135-136.

days."[215] Furthermore, the rapid development of the Iraqi press in the 1920s provided a more proximate source for periodicals.[216]

The prevalence of periodicals not only allowed Kuwaitis to access the intellectual output of the Arab world, but it also permitted them to participate in this discourse. During the 1920s an increasing number of Kuwaitis began writing in Arab journals, often reporting and debating local developments, thus connecting Kuwaiti affairs with the Pan-Arab plane. Chief among them was al-Rushaid, who contributed to Iraqi and Egyptian journals and became the local correspondent and subscription agent for the Cairene *al-Shura* in around 1925.[217] Its editor was Muhammad ᶜAli al-Tahir, a Palestinian Arab nationalist and a tireless campaigner on behalf of Palestine. The newspaper had a strongly anti-imperialist and transnational character, devoting a great deal of coverage to peripheral areas including the Gulf.[218] These qualities made *al-Shura* popular in Kuwait, where numerous notables subscribed to it from 1925 including the ruler, who also made a donation to support its publication. A number of other Kuwaitis aside from al-Rushaid also wrote for the newspaper.[219] This marked the start of a close connection between Kuwait and al-Tahir that would influence the development of education in the 1930s.

Al-Rushaid's journalistic activity led him to establish the first local periodical in 1928: the monthly *al-Kuwait* magazine. Ami Ayalon classes *al-Kuwait* with other contemporary publications in the Arabian Peninsula, stating: "in these places… primitive imported equipment was utilized to produce embryonic sheets that circulated locally among

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[215] "Khutwa fi Sabil al-Barid Bayn al-Kuwait wa-l-ᶜIraq," *al-Kuwait*, Dhu al-Ḥijja, 1346 AH, 152-153.
[216] Ayalon, 92.
[217] Al-Hijji, *al-Rushaid,* 108, 110-111, 128, 131; al-Ruwais, 34-37.
[218] Samih Shabib, *Muhammad ᶜAli al-Tahir: Tajrubatihi al-Sahafiyya fi Misr min Khilal Suhufihi al-Shura, al-Shabab, al-ᶜAlam 1924-1939* (Nicosia: al-Ittihad al-ᶜAm li-l-Kuttab wa-l-Sahafiyyin al-Filistiniyyin, 1990), 19-20, 31, 105-109, 167-170.
[219] Al-Hijji, *al-Rushaid,* 111-112; al-Ruwais 34-39, 74-75.

a tiny minority of educated males and probably had a negligible impact."[220] In fact, *al-Kuwait* was a substantial publication printed in Cairo's Arab Press, operated by the prominent Arab nationalist literary figure Khayr al-Din al-Zarkali.[221] Though its circulation was not large (600 at the beginning of its second year),[222] like other Islamic modernist organs it was very transnational. The magazine had subscription agents in Bahrain, Dubai, Qatar, Zubair, Baghdad, Basra, Mecca, and Bombay.[223] It published letters from readers in the Gulf states, Iraq, Egypt, Bombay, and Singapore.[224] To encourage *al-Kuwait*, ruling family members and merchants gifted subscriptions to the magazine to various clubs, schools, and prominent persons across the Islamic world.[225] A variety of journals including *al-Manar*, *al-Shura*, and Muhib al-Din al-Khatib's *al-Zahraʾ* published reviews of the magazine.[226]

Al-Kuwait sought to introduce Islamic modernist ideas to the Gulf while at the same time increasing awareness of the Gulf among Arab readers, thus fostering connections between the two. It published the views of modernist scholars such as Rida, al-Alusi, and Shakib Arsalan,[227] and introduced its readers to organizations such as the Young Men's Muslim Association.[228] In addition, each issue carried a segment in which Arabic journals from Egypt to Indonesia were reviewed, and readers were encouraged to subscribe to them.

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[220] Ayalon, 104.
[221] Al-Hijji, *al-Rushaid,* 139-142.
[222] Ibid., 198.
[223] "Wukalaʾ al-Majalla," *al-Kuwait*, Rabīᶜ al-Thānī, 1347 AH, 355.
[224] See for example: "al-Kuwait fi Nazar al-Fudalaʾ," *al-Kuwait*, Jamādī al-Ūlā, 1347 AH, 407; "al-Ghira ᶜAla al-Haq fi Dubai," Jamādī al-Ūlā, 1347 AH, 370; "al-Kuwait fi Nazar al-Fudalaʾ," *al-Kuwait*, Rabīᶜ al-Thānī, 1347 AH, 350; "al-Kuwait fi Singhafura," *al-Kuwait*, Rabīᶜ al-Awwal, 1347 AH, 297.
[225] "Ihdaʾ al-Kuwait," *al-Kuwait*, Jamādī al-Ūlā, 1348 AH, 686; "Ihdaʾ al-Kuwait," *al-Kuwait*, Rabīᶜ al-Awwal, 1348 AH, 612-613; "ᶜAtf Sumu Amir al-Kuwait ᶜala Hadhihi al-Majalla," *al-Kuwait* Ṣafar, 1348 AH, 565; "Ihdaʾ al-Kuwait," *al-Kuwait*, Rabīᶜ al-Thānī, 1347 AH, 354.
[226] "Al-Kuwait fi Nazar al-Fudalaʾ," *al-Kuwait*, Ramaḍān, 1348 AH, 830; "Aqwal al-Fudalaʾ fi al-Kuwait li-Sanatha al-Thaniyya," *al-Kuwait*, Rabīᶜ al-Awwal, 1348 AH, 609; "al-Kuwait fi Nazar al-Fudalaʾ," *al-Kuwait*, Jamādī al-Ākhira, 1347 AH, 472; "al-Kuwait fi Nazar al-Fudalaʾ," *al-Kuwait*, Jamādī al-Awwal, 1347 AH, 403-404; al-Ruwais, 84, 95-96.
[227] See for example: *al-Kuwait*, Shawwāl wa-Dhī al-Qiᶜda, 1346 AH, 55, 61.
[228] "Jamᶜiyyat al-Shubban al-Muslimin bi-Misr," *al-Kuwait*, Shawwāl wa-Dhī al-Qiᶜda, 1346 AH, 94.

The majority of the other articles dealt with the culture, history, and literature of the Gulf, and authors from this region penned much of this material. This drew them into the Pan-Arab reading community as active participants and interlocutors. Kuwait's first experiment with homegrown journalism proved short-lived. In 1928, al-Rushaid left Kuwait for Bahrain. He continued to publish *al-Kuwait* from there for another year, subsequently migrating to Java.[229]

By the end of the 1920s, the shaykhdom's once tenuous connections with the more developed Arab countries were rapidly expanding. The Islamic modernist movement that had emerged among a minority of Kuwaiti merchants in the lead-up to the First World War had become robust and influential. Furthermore, this movement was showing signs of a gradual transition from Islamic modernist Arabism to secular Arab nationalism, particularly among its younger elements. Aside from some anti-British activity during the war and the formation of the 1921 advisory council, the activities of this movement were primarily cultural, centering on education. It established the first schools modelled on the modern educational systems of the Arab countries, strengthening educational ties to these states. The development of education in Kuwait was part and parcel of a larger cultural movement inspired by increasing contact with the Arab world and characterized by clear political overtones. The association between modern education in and political ideology in Kuwait would become more apparent with the transition from cultural to political activism in the 1930s, and as the modernization and "Arabization" of Kuwait's schools accelerated.

[229] Al-Hijji, *al-Rushaid,* 172-230.

Chapter Two: Arab Nationalist Connections and the Birth of State Education, 1930-1942

In the 1910s and 1920s, Kuwait's merchants commenced a process of cultural reorientation away from their Indian Ocean trading partners towards the Arab lands of the north and west. This process unfolded in a number of ways: through interaction with the Arab press, the strengthening of ties with Arab thinkers and activists, and the establishment of novel institutions through which Islamic modernist merchants and ʿulamaʾ sought to mold their society in the image of the progressive Arab states. Modern education was the most significant and revolutionary of these avant-garde imports. It shaped the worldview of an increasing proportion of Kuwait's youth, brought progressive and often politically-minded Arabs to Kuwait as teachers, and allowed students to more easily venture abroad to study.

In the 1930s, this process of reorientation reached new heights. During this decade, the increasing integration of the Arab peoples combined with demographic changes, the influence of Iraq, and the reverberations of events in Palestine to propel Arab nationalism to the forefront of regional politics. These factors had an impact on Kuwait, and brought it closer into the Arab fold. The shaykhdom acquired its own Arab nationalist movement that launched a sustained campaign of support for the Palestinian cause. This led the merchant activists to develop close ties to Arab nationalist circles in Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, significantly broadening their regional cultural and political networks.

The nationalist merchants also sought to implement their progressive ideals domestically. No longer content with voluntary charitable activity, they sought to use the resources of the state to bring about reform through the creation of elected administrative councils. In 1938, the merchants' experience of activism and administration combined with their disaffection with the existing regime led them to launch the Majlis Movement. It

resulted in the establishment of the powerful Legislative Council, which succeeded in implementing a host of modernizing reforms before being quashed by the ruler and his allies. Nevertheless, the ruler retained most of the administrative reforms brought about by the Legislative Council and the administrative councils before it. These formed the institutional basis of the emerging Kuwaiti state.

In 1936, the reformist merchants established the Educational Council. This institution took over the schools established by the Islamic modernists and brought them under government control. This marked a turning point in the development of education in Kuwait, after which the extent of its modernization and "Arabization" would increase greatly. Several factors would lead to the rise of Arab nationalist influence in Kuwait's nascent educational system. Firstly, many of the merchant members of the Educational Council were committed Arab nationalists for whom educational reform and political activism were closely associated. They drew upon their Pan-Arab networks to employ teachers to oversee Kuwait's schools. This resulted in the arrival in 1936 of a deputation of teachers from Palestine's Supreme Muslim Council. Palestinian administration of education in Kuwait, which continued until 1942, was the second factor behind the spread of Arab nationalist influence. It was the Palestinian teachers who brought about the third factor: the implementation of Iraq's Arab nationalist curriculum in Kuwait.

Throughout this period, the "Arabization" of education in Kuwait, along with a new wave of scholarships that began in 1938, allowed growing numbers of Kuwaiti students to study in Arab countries. Here, they became drawn into pan-Arab cultural networks, and came to identify with Arab nationalism and the values of the *effendiyya*. Already by the late 1930s, there existed a sufficient number of educated Kuwaitis or "proto-*effendiyya*" to have a local political impact.

Nationalism & Education in the Arab World

Educational institutions in Iraq and the Levant played a foundational role in the organizational and ideological development of Arab nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s. This can be attributed to several factors, namely: the educational legacy of the Islamic modernist movement, the influence of the Iraqi educational system, and the relatively liberal educational policy in the Arab Mandates. Education in Iraq provides a classic illustration of the top-down imposition of nationalist ideology, though the regional scope of its nation-building project sets it apart from the European model it emulated. In the other Mandates, colonial control over education was more strict, so Arab nationalist influence was disseminated in a grassroots manner by educators-cum-activists. Finally, the rise of nationalist influence within Arab educational systems coincided with the expansion of the *effendiyya* stratum. The nationalist environment within state educational systems shaped this new generation of *effendiyya*, which pioneered more radical forms of nationalist activism. The role of education in the fostering of nationalism in the Arab world can thus only be explained with reference to all three broad theoretical approaches previously discussed, namely: top-down, grassroots, and indirect.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Islamic modernist movement was heavily involved in the development of modern education in the Arab world during the Ottoman period. As many Islamic modernists gradually adopted Arab nationalist ideology in the wake of the First World War, the educational institutions they oversaw were affected by this ideological shift. This applied particularly to schools that evaded direct control by the colonial authorities and were therefore able to maintain control over their curriculums. Examples include the influential Rawdat al-Maᶜarif in Jerusalem and the Najah School in Nablus. Founded respectively in 1906 and 1918 as private Islamic modernist and Arabist

initiatives, these schools became strongholds of Arab nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s. Rather than submit to colonial control, they came to be administered by the semi-governmental Supreme Muslim Council.[1] Another example is the school network operated by Lebanon's Jamᶜiyyat al-Maqasid al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya (Islamic Society of Benevolent Intentions), which was established in the late nineteenth century and became associated with Arab nationalism in the colonial and post-independence periods.[2] It will be argued that Kuwait's schools were similar to the above in that Arab nationalist influence gradually came to eclipse that of Islamic modernism.

The second and perhaps most influential factor in forging a link between education and Arab nationalism was Iraq's creation of an educational system centered upon the goal of Arab nationalist indoctrination. This policy was closely tied to the emergence of Iraq as a regional patron of Arab nationalism. Following the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans, Faisal bin Husain's short-lived Arab Kingdom of Syria provided a focal point for Arab nationalists from across the region.[3] Faisal's ouster by the French and subsequent installment as King of Iraq in 1921 caused this focal point to shift to Baghdad. The king aspired to regain his Syrian throne and extend his influence to other Arab lands, enlisting the support of nationalist activists. As a result, "the Iraqi capital became the center of a wide network of radical Arab nationalists,"[4] many of whom looked upon Iraq as a

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[1] Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusaelm: al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 14, 29; Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam Under the British Mandate for Palestine* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 139-143; John Harte, "Contesting the Past in Mandate Palestine: History Teaching for Palestinian Arabs Under British Rule, 1917-1948" (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, 2009), 62-63, 75-76; Weldon C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing A Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 50.

[2] Michael Johnson, "Factional Politics in Lebanon: The Case of the 'Islamic Society of Benevolent Intentions' (al-Maqāṣid) in Beirut," *Middle Eastern Studies* 14, no. 1 (1978), 56-58.

[3] Ernest Dawn, "The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology in the Interwar Years," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 20, no. 1 (Feb 1998), 80; Reeva S. Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars: The Militarist Origins of Tyranny* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 44-45.

[4] Dawn, "Formation," 80, 84; N. Masalha, "Faisal's Pan-Arabism, 1921-33," *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 4 (Oct 1991), 679-680.

Piedmont or Prussia that could unite the various Arab states.[5] Iraq's independence in 1932 enabled Faisal to "pursue, much more vigorously than in the past, his policy of Arab unity."[6]

One of the areas in which the Iraqi government's pan-Arab policy was most evident was in education. This was largely due to the efforts of Sati[c] al-Husri, who was arguably the earliest secular Arab nationalist thinker and the most influential of his generation.[7] As Iraq's first Director General of Education (1921-1927), he laid the foundation of the country's educational system. He subsequently served in other senior educational and cultural posts until 1941.[8] Al-Husri's ideology of nationalist pedagogy was shaped by both the French educational model and German romantic nationalism, which held that "language and history are the two most important components of nationhood."[9] Although he saw the Arab nation as natural and perennial, he held that national awareness must be actively fostered.[10] French-style education, "with its emphasis on language and national history to the exclusion of practical subjects," was the ideal vehicle by which to spread this awareness.[11]

The Iraqi curriculum created by al-Husri closely followed the French model. History was made "the core of national education,"[12] and was intended to "increase faith in the desirability and possibility of unity" through a selective reading of the past that highlighted the glories of the Arab nation. The history of nationalism in Europe was also taught as an example for the Arabs to follow.[13] The "second element in al-Husri's

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[5] Porath, 14-15.
[6] Ibid.,, "Foreword," n. pag.
[7] Cleveland, 85, 90-92.
[8] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 69-72; Cleveland, 62, 71-72.
[9] Cleveland, 99.
[10] Ibid., 103, 137-139.
[11] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 71; Cleveland, 140.
[12] Cleveland, 144.
[13] Ibid., 141-147.

nationalist philosophy" was instruction in Arabic language, the Arab nation's lifeblood. Other "national subjects" such as geography, civics, and "physical education in the form of military drill" completed the students' indoctrination.[14]

The educational system engineered by al-Husri, and perpetuated by his successors until 1941, also complemented the militaristic agenda pursued by the Iraqi government. Al-Husri saw compulsory military conscription as an essential "adjunct to civil education" in the nation-building process.[15] The introduction of conscription became a nationalist cause in Iraq, reflecting the growing prestige of the army, and was finally implemented despite British objections in 1934.[16] King Faisal extended this militaristic ethos to the schools by instating paramilitary training for pupils. Al-Husri enthusiastically subscribed to this trend, supporting the development of the Boy Scouts, which he imbued with Arab nationalist symbolism, and the Futuwwa.[17] The latter was a state-run paramilitary youth group established in the early 1930s that emulated the "imagery" of fascist youth groups in Europe.[18] By the end of the 1930s, the Futuwwa had a system of military-style ranks and insignia, and both students and educators had to wear its uniform at all times.[19]

While the Iraqi case closely resembles the European model of top-down dissemination of nationalist ideology through centralized state education, it differs in one crucial respect: its nation-building project was not limited to Iraqi territory. As Reeva Simon points out, "Iraq's 'imagined community' was that of the Arabs, rather than Iraqis or Mesopotamians."[20] Through the hosting of Arab teachers and students, the export of textbooks and curricula, and intergovernmental cooperation, the Iraqi educational system

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[14] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 73-74, 88.
[15] Cleveland, 165-166.
[16] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 109-114.
[17] Cleveland, 167; Wien, 99, 105.
[18] Wien, 78, 89-91.
[19] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 103-104; Wien, 96-96.
[20] Reeva S. Simon, "The Imposition of Nationalism on a Non-Nation State: The Case of Iraq During the Interwar Period, 1921-1941," in Jankowski and Gershoni, *Rethinking Nationalism,* 88.

spread Arab nationalist ideology throughout the Arab world.

Iraq's Ministry of Education employed numerous nationalist intellectuals from across the region who did much to foster an Arab nationalist environment within the institution. Al-Husri and his successors made the employment of non-Iraqi Arabs a matter of policy due to the initial lack of qualified locals, and presumably also as a means by which to promote Arab nationalism. Prominent nationalists who worked for the ministry include the Palestinians Darwish al-Miqdadi and Akram Zuᶜaitir, the Lebanese Anis al-Nusuli, the Syrian ᶜUthman al-Hawrani, and the Egyptian Mustafa al-Wakil.[21] The ministry also adopted history textbooks authored by some of these men, as well as by Arab educators outside Iraq. Ernest Dawn argues that these works played a formative role in articulating Arab nationalist ideology.[22] As well as harboring teachers, Iraq also provided scholarships to students from across the Arab world.[23]

As those who had worked or studied in Iraq returned to their countries or were employed elsewhere they spread its curriculum and style of nationalist pedagogy. In the words of Israel Gershoni, the Iraqi educational system "exported the revolution happenstantially."[24] Al-Husri also instated a policy of cultivating educational ties with other Arab states. Coordination with Egypt became particularly strong after a 1935 agreement for the secondment of prominent Egyptian academics to Iraq. Gershoni and Jankowski cite educational exchange between Iraq and Egypt as a contributing factor to the rise of Arab nationalism in the latter during the 1930s.[25] In this fashion, the influence of al-Husri's model of nationalist education extended far beyond the borders of Iraq.

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[21] Al-Saqqaf, *Hikayat,* 172-174; Choueiri, 104; Cleveland, 64; Dawn, "Formation," 80, 84; Eppel, *Iraq,* 233; Simon, *Iraq Between,* 76, 88.
[22] Dawn, "Formation," 68-69.
[23] S. al-Shihab, Vol. 1, 123; IOR/R/15/5/196 Cornwallis to Peterson, 4/3/1942.
[24] Gershoni, 18.
[25] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 27; Yehoshua Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity 1930-1945* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), 175-177.

Al-Husri and other likeminded Arab educators were able to implement their nationalist agendas in the educational field due to a third factor: the Mandatory powers' relatively hands-off policy towards the educational systems in Iraq, Palestine, and Syria. It is doubtful whether al-Husri could have realized many of his plans had the Mandatory government not relinquished control of Iraqi education in 1923, after which British advisers could only make nonbinding suggestions.[26] A 1931 British report "mentions that in the substitution of Iraqi for British control, the Ministry of Education was ahead of all other departments."[27] Similar situations prevailed in Palestine and Syria. In comparison to Iraq, the British and the French exercised much greater control over education in these states, though here too they appear to have lacked the ability or motivation to curb the nationalist activism of educators. As in Iraq, the Palestinian and Syrian government educational institutions became major centers for Arab nationalist indoctrination, albeit without high-level official support.[28]

Yoram Kahati attempts to account for the exceptional character of educational institutions under the Mandatory regimes. He argues that the colonial powers saw ministries of education as safe, apolitical zones where they could "prepare the new cadre of local civil servants who would learn to run their future state machinery." Arabs hence became a numerical majority within these institutions, and represented the most educated and westernized elements in their societies. Drawing on Smith's theory of the intelligentsia, Kahati holds that these employees became radicalized as the colonial authorities blocked their occupational advancement. They therefore formulated an oppositional nationalist

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[26] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 76.
[27] Cleveland, 65.
[28] On Syria see: Yoram Kahati, "The Role of Education in the Development of Arab Nationalism in the Fertile Crescent During the 1920s," in *Political Thought and Political History: Studies in Memory of Elie Kedourie*, ed. Moshe Gammer (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), 28-29; Schumann, 191-192. On Palestine see below.

ideology. With the political arena closed to them, they relied upon the educational system to disseminate their ideas. Furthermore, the Mandatory authorities were not able to effectively counter the nationalists' influence due to their "liberal-democratic approach to education" and reliance upon Arab staff.[29]

Harte provides a detailed account of the emergence of the Arab nationalist current within the educational system of Mandatory Palestine. The British Mandate's Department of Education was "rigidly centralised" and excluded Palestinian Arabs from policymaking.[30] However, the dominance of Arabs over the lower rungs of the educational hierarchy enabled them to transform Palestinian schools into "seminaries of Arab nationalism."[31] Since the medium of instruction was Arabic, Arab educators had significant leeway in the interpretation of British-imposed curricula and the translation and authoring of textbooks. Furthermore, nationalist teachers were able propagate their ideology through informal education and extracurricular activities.[32]

In contrast to Iraq's top-down model, the Palestinian and Syrian cases highlight the role of grassroots dynamics in fostering Arab nationalist identification within educational systems. One explanation for this is provided by Anderson's aforementioned portrayal of schools as sites of "secular pilgrimages," where people of diverse origins intermingle and form a common identity through a shared foundational experience. Hilary Falb Kalisman applies this concept to the experience of students from the Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan Mandates sent on scholarship to the AUB. Here, they intermingled with other Arab students, and "joined the same clubs, sang the same songs, kicked the same footballs and

[29] Yoram Kahati, "The Role of Some Leading Arab Educators in the Development of the Ideology of Arab Nationalism" (PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 1992), 362-364.
[30] Harte, 228-229.
[31] Ibid., 96-97.
[32] Ibid., 19-25.

participated in the same demonstrations."[33] As a result, they "forged a community and conception of national belonging across the proto-national boundaries of the Mandates."[34]

In her study of the Arab nationalist movement in Jordan, Betty Anderson depicts similar "pilgrimages," albeit occurring on two levels. The first is that of the Jordanian state, whose educational system was designed to cultivate a territorial identity. However, factors such as a dependence upon textbooks from other Arab states meant that "the interconnectedness of Arab history, language, and ethnicity" was simultaneously impressed upon students. Due to the lack of local facilities, students wishing to pursue higher education had to do so in Lebanon, Syria, or Egypt, where they undertook broader, pan-Arab pilgrimages.[35] Anderson argues that the dual nature of these pilgrimages was a factor in producing "competing territorial and Arab nationalisms" in Jordan.[36]

The interpersonal networks forged through "pilgrimages" often formed the basis for regional cooperation in education and Arab nationalist activism. Kalisman points out that scholarship recipients who graduated from the AUB

> played key roles in the formation of school systems, the composition of textbooks used throughout the Arabic speaking world, and the promotion of… a broad notion of pan-Arabism. An AUB degree guaranteed employability in the Arabic speaking world, allowing graduates to move freely from one Mandate to another and to rise through the ranks of each government's bureaucracy.[37]

Kahati similarly maintains that the Arab "educator-intellectuals" who came to dominate education under the Mandates "became the most important and influential group in the" Arab world, and organized themselves into a transnational "network of societies and clubs"

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[33] Hilary Falb Kalisman, "Bursary Scholars at the American University of Beirut: Living and Practising Arab Unity," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 4 (2015), 602.
[34] Ibid., 617.
[35] Betty S. Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan: The Street and the State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 19-20, 27-28.
[36] Ibid., 14.
[37] Kalisman, 609.

spanning the region.[38]

Many of the Arab nationalist organizations that were established throughout the region starting in the 1930s were founded on the basis of educational networks, whether local or transnational. Teachers and students at the Najah School, under the direction of the Arab nationalist educator Muhammad ʿIzzat Darwaza, played a leading role in the foundation of Palestine's Hizb al-Istiqlal al-ʿArabi (the Arab Independence Party) in 1932.[39] Students and academics at Egyptian universities, many of them from other Arab countries, founded some of Egypt's first Arab nationalist societies in the early 1930s.[40]

Educational networks were also fundamental to Baghdad's Muthanna Club, which became one of the primary "foci for Iraqi pan-Arab activity" after its founding in 1935.[41] According to Cleveland, the club was initially founded as the Iraqi branch of the short-lived Lajnat Nashr al-Thaqafa al-ʿArabiyya (the Committee for the Spread of Arab Culture), formed by Egyptian and Iraqi academics "in 1931 to coordinate Arab cultural activities between Baghdad and Cairo."[42] The membership of the Muthanna Club was comprised primarily of teachers, students, and graduates. Prominent "educator-intellectuals" such al-Husri and al-Miqdadi used it as a key outlet for the propagation of their views.[43]

One of the most prominent examples of an Arab nationalist political group that relied heavily on educational networks is the transnational secret society informally known as Jamaʿat al-Kitab al-Ahmar (the Red Book Group). A detailed discussion of this group's formation is warranted both for its illustrative value and its centrality to the Arab nationalist networks within the Kuwaiti Department of Education. In 1935, a group of Beirut-based

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[38] Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 364.
[39] Weldon C. Matthews, "Pan-Islam or Arab Nationalism? The Meaning of the 1931 Jerusalem Islamic Congress Reconsidered," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 1 (Feb 2003) 6, 10; Mattar, 66.
[40] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 23-24.
[41] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 64.
[42] Cleveland, 74; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 24.
[43] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 66, 81; Wien, 32-33.

activists weary of local party politics sought to form a movement that would be truly pan-Arab in its outlook, goals, and scope. They joined with Qustantin Zuraiq, history professor at the AUB, who became the group's leader.[44] Owing to its extreme secrecy, the organization had no official name, deriving its appellation from the red colored books in which its program was printed.[45] It is referred to elsewhere in the academic literature as the Arab Liberation Society[46] and the Arab Nationalist Party.[47] The group's goals were to fight colonialism, undertake social reform, and establish a secular, federated Arab state.

The Red Book Group was an elitist organization that recruited only educated members, so it naturally included many students and teachers.[48] Schools and universities were among the group's main centers for recruitment and organization. The group's main center in Beirut was the AUB, where Zuraiq influenced students from across the Arab world through his lectures on Arab nationalism. He was also advisor to the student group al-ʿUrwa al-Wuthqa (the Firmest Bond, a Qurʾanic term), which became a front for the group's activities at the university. Another of the group's leaders, Taqi al-Din al-Sulh, was a teacher at Beirut's Grand Lycée Franco-Libanais, which also became a recruitment center.[49]

Educational networks served as one of the key channels for the Red Book Group's extension beyond the borders of Lebanon. In 1935, Farid Zain al-Din, a Lebanese Red Book Group member and AUB graduate, became headmaster of the Najah School in Nablus. Not long after, he established a branch of the group in Palestine in conjunction with

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[44] Shafiq Jeha, *al-Haraka al-ʿArabiyya al-Siriyya: Jamaʿat al-Kitab al-Ahmar, 1935-1945* (Beirut: al-Furat, 2004), 34-35, 47.
[45] Ibid., 36-37.
[46] Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 401-406.
[47] Raghid El-Solh, *Lebanon and Arabism: National Identity and State Formation* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 29-30, 54-55.
[48] Jeha, 35, 72.
[49] Ibid., 76-89.

fellow teachers and AUB alumni, with the Najah School as its main base of operations.[50] In the 1930s, the Red Book Group gradually built up a presence in Iraq as a number of its Levantine members were employed as teachers in the government schools. Most prominent among these was the Palestinian Darwish al-Miqdadi. The first attempt to establish a formal branch in Iraq was made in 1939, when a delegation from the AUB's al-ᶜUrwa al-Wuthqa student group visited the country at the invitation of the Iraqi Ministry of Education.[51] Once established, the Iraqi branch quickly infiltrated and took over the Muthanna Club, a natural target given its popularity with teachers, students, and the educated.[52] As shall be seen, the Red Book Group eventually established a branch in Kuwait, connecting the shaykhdom to Arab nationalist networks that would influence its educational system. Educational networks would again prove central in the emergence of the new wave of Arab nationalist organizations that emerged in the post-1948 period, as shall be seen later in the case of the Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN).

The rise of Arab nationalist influence within the educational systems of many Arab states coincided with another development: the expansion of the *effendiyya* stratum throughout the region. The decade of the 1930s was a watershed in this process, particularly in Iraq, Egypt, and Syria. This was in large part due to the expansion of state education, along with other factors such as rapid urbanization and the growth of bureaucracies and certain professions.[53] As the product of state educational systems, the new generation of *effendiyya* was shaped by the increasingly Arab nationalist mood within them. Coupled with social and generational shifts, this made the members of this stratum more prone to radical nationalist activism. It is noteworthy that the 1930s witnessed the

[50] Ibid., 205-209.
[51] Ibid., 247-248.
[52] Ibid., 68, 255.
[53] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 11-13; Schumann, 174, 181; Wien, 10-11, 16.

formation of more extreme, youth-based nationalist groups throughout the region such as Palestine's Istiqlal Party, ʿIsbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmi (the League of Nationalist Action) in Syria and Lebanon, the Red Book Group, and Baghdad's Muthanna Club.[54]

Peter Wien illustrates the influence of state education on the expanding *effendiyya* stratum in his discussion of Iraq's "Young Effendiyya," a subgroup that emerged in the 1930s. Its members were the first to pass through Iraq's nationalist educational system. They represented a more diverse demographic than the Ottoman-era *effendiyya*, and became disillusioned with the Iraqi political system and continued British occupation.[55] These factors "produced an inclination to authoritarian, totalitarian, and even fascist models of society organization" within the "Young Effendiyya," pitting them against the more moderate Arab nationalist elite.[56] Gershoni and Jankowski demonstrate that a similar process occurred even in Egypt, where state education encouraged a Westernized territorial nationalism opposed to Arab identity. The "new *effendiyya*" that emerged in the 1930s was "not as thoroughly Westernized and more attuned to Egypt's Arab-Muslim heritage" due to its largely middle class profile and recent rural origin. The members of this group were therefore inclined towards "supra-Egyptian" forms of identity, most prominently Arab nationalism and Islamism, which came to eclipse the previously dominant Egyptian nationalism.[57]

The relationship between the *effendiyya* and educational systems was reciprocal, as the *effendiyya* produced by these systems were then employed within them, strengthening their nationalist character. As has already been stated, Kahati argues that Arab civil servants in Mandatory governments were most likely to work in educational departments.

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[54] Choueiri, 92-95; Matthews "Jerusalem Islamic Conference," 5-8; Wien, 32.
[55] Wien, 10-16, 31-34.
[56] Ibid., 11.
[57] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 14-15.

The indirect, social effects of education were thus intimately tied to the top-down and grassroots modes of disseminating Arab nationalist ideology within educational systems.

The strong connection between Arab nationalist ideology and educational systems in the 1920s and 1930s was thus the result of multiple, interconnected processes that traversed the various states of the Arab world. It was within this highly transnational, multifaceted context that state education emerged in Kuwait. Beginning in 1936, a combination of Iraqi influence and activists with ties to regional networks led to the spread of Arab nationalist influence within the shaykhdom's nascent educational system. This was the result of the increasing economic, political, and cultural integration of Kuwait into the Arab world, which reached a high point in the 1930s. One of the most significant effects of this integration was the emergence of an indigenous, merchant-based Arab nationalist movement. It will be argued that this movement was inextricably linked to the evolution of education in the shaykhdom, and therefore warrants an in-depth discussion.

The Pan-Arab Connections of Kuwait's Merchant Opposition, 1931-1940

It is unclear precisely when organized Arab nationalist activism first emerged in Kuwait. As stated in the previous chapter, there is evidence that a few Kuwaitis espoused Arab nationalist ideology around the time of the First World War. A further development in this direction was the emergence of Arab-oriented, secular (but not necessarily nationalist) inclinations among certain youth in the 1920s, which found expression in the Literary Club. It appears that a shift towards more organized activism occurred in the early 1930s, with the appearance of a group known as al-Shabiba al-Kuwaitiyya (the Kuwaiti Youth).

The Shabiba group is largely overlooked in existing literature, which tends to date the rise of Arab nationalism in Kuwait to the latter half of the 1930s.[58] Its origins lie in the new wave of radical Arab nationalism emanating from neighboring Iraq, though it soon shifted its focus towards the Palestinian cause. With the eruption of the Arab Revolt in Palestine in 1936, the tenor of pro-Palestinian activism in Kuwait increased. It became a major factor in the mobilization of Kuwait's merchants, contributing directly to the emergence of the Majlis Movement in 1938. Through this activism, Kuwait's merchants strengthened their ties to nationalist circles in Iraq and the Levant, a development that led to the creation of a Kuwaiti branch of the transnational Red Book Group by the end of the decade.

The intensification of Kuwait's ties to Iraq, Palestine, and the Levant occurred at a time of increasing physical and intellectual interconnection in the Arab world, which played a fundamental role in the growth of Arab nationalism. In the 1920s and 1930s, significant developments occurred in regional transport and communication that "helped to create a shared world of taste and ideas" among the Arabs.[59] In the field of transport, "the most spectacular change was the conquest of the desert by the motor car." A new network of roads spanning the Fertile Crescent emerged in the 1920s, reducing travel time between Iraq and Syria from a month to less than a day. Improved transportation in turn facilitated the distribution of periodicals and books, whose production increased during this period.[60] With the launch of the first official Arabic-language radio station in Egypt in 1934, there appeared a new medium that "[unified] the countries of the region even further in terms of

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[58] Falah Al-Mdairis, "al-Saqr wa-l-ᶜAdsani wa-l-Ghanim wa-l-Sarhan Aᶜzaᵓ fi Jamaᶜat al-Kitab al-Ahmar," *al-Qabas,* December 8, 2006; Hashim, 74; Zahlan, *The Making,* 36. Al-Mdairis at one point refers to the existence of a secret Arab nationalist organization in Kuwait in the early 1930s, but provides no details. Al-Mdairis, *Malamih Awaliyya,* 6. As far as can be ascertained, the only scholar to address the Shabiba is Najat al-Jasim, though her brief account begins in 1933 and neglects earlier mentions of the group. Al-Jasim, *al-Tatawwur al-Siyasi,* 155.

[59] Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner, 1991), 339.

[60] Ibid., 338.

communications, as it could traverse boundaries more readily than written texts."[61] As Anderson notes, radio has played a similar role to print in the forging of imagined communities, with the added advantage that it has allowed the illiterate masses to be incorporated.[62] The expansion of the media created "a universe of discourse which united educated Arabs more fully than the pilgrimage and the travels of scholars in search of learning had been able to do."[63]

Kuwait was no exception to the revolution in transportation and communications sweeping the region. The opening of the Kuwait-Zubair motor route in 1928 and its role in vastly reducing travel and mail time have already been discussed in the first chapter, as has the increase in newspaper consumption in the shaykhdom during the 1920s. Kuwait's exposure to Arab media increased greatly in the subsequent decade. The burgeoning Iraqi press was particularly influential. In 1935, the British Political Agent reported: "Nearly all the Iraq Newspapers are received here and are read with avidity."[64] The promotional activity of various Arab periodicals in Kuwait provides an indication of the expanding Kuwaiti readership. In 1931, a Syrian editor of several Arab nationalist periodicals made the first of three visits to the shaykhdom over the course of the 1930s in order to collect subscriptions.[65] In 1937, free copies of an anti-British Egyptian newspaper were distributed in Kuwait in an effort to attract readers. This publication gave prominent coverage to events in Arabia,[66] a tendency that the British observed in "the Arab Press as a whole" by the end of the decade.[67] As shall be seen, the emerging interest in Arabian affairs within the Arab press led it to give prominent coverage and support to Kuwait's Majlis Movement in 1938.

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[61] Ayalon, 74, 82.
[62] Benedict Anderson, 135.
[63] Hourani, 339.
[64] IOR/R/15/5/126: Dickson to Loch, 8/8/1935.
[65] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 1 August – 30 September 1936; IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1931, 64.
[66] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 16-31 December 1937.
[67] IOR/L/P&S/12/4584: Fowle to Peel, 8/7/1939.

The Kuwaitis were also quick to adopt the novel medium of the radio, which became very influential in cultivating Arab nationalist opinion. Shortly after the beginning of Arabic broadcasting in 1934, Shaykh Ahmad al-Jabir was given a radio set by the Kuwait Oil Company.[68] Almost instantly, the owning of radios became very fashionable among Kuwaiti merchants.[69] Popular cafes soon made this medium available to the common man, and in 1939 the Political Agent attributed a recent rise in political awareness among Kuwaiti sailors to "the radios which they hear in the coffee-shops."[70] As with the Arab press, radio would have a direct impact on political events in Kuwait in 1938.

The Iraqi Connection

It is unsurprising that the spark of Arab nationalist activism in Kuwait was ignited from neighboring Iraq, where a more assertive Arab nationalist agenda was taking hold in the 1930s. Faisal's pan-Arab expansionist policy was intensified under his successor Ghazi (1933-1939), who was more radical in his nationalism and closely aligned with the military.[71] Parties such as Hizb al-Ikhaʾ al-Watani (Party of Patriotic Brotherhood), which espoused extreme Arab nationalism and militarism, also contributed to this environment. Despite its official alliance with Britain, Iraq "increasingly became a center for pan-Arab anti-British activity," particularly after the Arab Revolt erupted in Palestine in 1936.[72]

With its small size, backward government, historical ties to Basra, and access to the sea, Kuwait no doubt appeared a good starting point for Iraq's project of Pan-Arab unification. Some in Baghdad also saw annexation as a solution to the longstanding problem of smuggling from Kuwait into Iraq, an issue that marred relations between the

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[68] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 1-15 November 1934.
[69] IOR/R/15/1/717: Administration Report 1937, 36; IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 16-30 September 1935; Intelligence Summary, 1-15 January 1935; al-Hatim, 125.
[70] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Prior, 5/10/1939.
[71] Hashim, 80; Simon, *Iraq Between,* 114-117.
[72] Hashim, 73; Simon, *Iraq Between,* 61-62.

two states in the 1920s and 1930s.[73] According to Saeed Khalil Hashim, the first official Iraqi statement advocating unity with Kuwait was made in the al-Ikhaʾ Party's newspaper in 1933, at a time when that party was in power.[74] Over the following two years numerous articles advocating unity or annexation appeared in the Iraqi press, in addition to sympathetic Syrian and Palestinian publications. By 1935 these articles became so frequent that the British suspected the Iraqi "Ministry of Propaganda" of organizing them.[75] This media campaign climaxed between 1938 and 1939 in association with the activities of the Majlis Movement in Kuwait.

Despite political tensions, commercial ties between Kuwait and Iraq continued to flourish in the post-Ottoman period, allowing for the diffusion of Iraqi political influence among Kuwaiti merchants. Date plantations remained a key economic concern for both the Al Sabah and merchant families. In 1938 the Political Agent reported that "about 35 Kuwait families have date-gardens of some size in 'Iraq."[76] The most prominent of these were the Al Saqr, popularly known as the "Date Kings."[77] It will be remembered that the patriarch of this family, Hamad, headed the 1921 advisory council and became leader of the merchant opposition. Following his death in 1930, his son ʿAbd Allah inherited the mantle of leadership.[78] Under ʿAbd Allah's direction, the merchant opposition movement adopted a markedly Arab nationalist, pro-Iraqi orientation. Alongside the traditional date industry there also emerged new joint business ventures such as the aforementioned Kuwait-Iraq Motor Transport Company and the Kuwait-Iraq Electric Supply Company. The latter was

[73] Hashim, 22-41.
[74] Ibid., 71-72.
[75] IOR/R/15/5/126: Dickson to PR, 20/11/1935; Dickson to PR, 5/9/1935; Dickson to PR, 18/9/1935; Dickson to PR, 13/2/1934.
[76] IOR/L/P&S/12/3894A: deGaury to PR, 12/3/1938.
[77] Hashim, 17.
[78] Crystal, 41.

established in 1933 and directed by the Kuwaiti merchant and Islamic modernist activist Sultan al-Kulaib.[79]

As in the Ottoman period, Kuwaiti merchants travelled frequently to Basra or resided there for long periods, rendering them susceptible to ideological influence. As early as 1930, the British Political Agent in Kuwait warned of "the ever filtering in 'Nationalist' poison from 'Iraq." He believed that

> Important Basrawis who come down on visits, or who own property in Kuwait, are by order actively engaging themselves in anti-British propaganda as well as preaching the doctrine of the amalgamation of Kuwait with 'Iraq. Similar preaching goes on in Basrah… among the big Kuwait business men and date garden owners.[80]

Among the alleged disseminators of this propaganda was the prominent businessman Hamid al-Naqib, who featured in the previous chapter.[81] A brother of Talib al-Naqib and an itinerant resident of both Kuwait and Basra, he served as a deputy in the Iraqi parliament and reportedly wanted "to see Kuwait absorbed into Iraq."[82] The Political Agent also accused "the rising generation of Kuwaitis brought up in Basrah," i.e. sons of merchants and students, of engaging in this pro-Iraqi, Arab nationalist propaganda.[83]

The first hint of the existence of organized Arab nationalist activism in Kuwait dates to 1931. In his annual report for that year, the British Political Agent made the first documented reference to "the 'Shabiba' or 'Youths' Party' in Kuwait, a newly formed group which imbibes the Political views of some of the Iraq extremists." In January, the group presented a petition to Shaykh Ahmad objecting to anti-Islamic preaching by an Arab member of the American Reform Church mission. The ruler reacted in a hostile manner and

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[79] Hashim, 21.
[80] IOR/R/15/5/126: PA to Biscoe, 25/4/1930.
[81] Ibid.,.
[82] IOR/R/15/5/179: Note on Kuwait in 1933, Dickson.
[83] IOR/R/15/5/126: PA to Biscoe, 25/4/1930.

warned the youth against future troublemaking.[84] The missionaries' account adds that the "Young Men of Kuwait" organized a boycott of their bible shop and school, and established "an all-Islamic, all-English day and night school" with a former student of the missionary school as teacher. The report adds that the "Arab school… flourished for a few months," and "there was much talk about an Iraqi or Syrian teacher for the future." However, the venture eventually failed due to internal disagreements.[85]

It is telling that the first incidence of organized Arab nationalist activism in Kuwait was to large extent concerned with education. The "Shabiba" group's opposition to the missionaries may be indicative of the continued influence of Islamic modernism, though even secular Arab nationalists during this period had reason to oppose missionary activity. Darwish al-Miqdadi, for example, argued that Western missionaries were an extension of colonialism, and served to distance Arabs from their cultural heritage and weaken their national sentiment.[86]

The influence of Iraqi Arab nationalism, highlighted by the Political Agent, was no doubt the primary impetus behind the emergence of al-Shabiba al-Kuwaitiyya. A number of new youth groups were established in Iraq during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and it is thus understandable that this phenomenon would extend to Kuwait during this time.[87] A reference to a similarly named group in Basra, Nadi al-Shabiba al-ᶜIraqiyya (Iraqi Youths' Club), appears in *al-Kuwait* in the summer of 1929.[88] One of the most significant of these youth groups was Jamᶜiyyat al-Jawwal al-ᶜArabi (the Arab Rover Society). This fervently Arab nationalist, militaristic scouting organization was founded in the early 1930s

[84] IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1931, 63.
[85] "Annual Report of the Arabian Mission for the Year 1930-1931," Apr-Jun 1932, 12.
[86] Dawn, *Formation,* 76-77.
[87] Wien, 90.
[88] "Al-Sahafa al-ᶜIraqiyya," *al-Kuwait*, Ṣafar 1348 AH, 593.

following the merger of two student groups. Most of the society's founders and leaders were teachers, including the prominent Palestinian educator Darwish al-Miqdadi.[89]

A former member of the Arab Rover Society recalls participating in a trip organized by some teachers (including al-Miqdadi) to Kuwait, Bahrain, and Muhammara in 1933.[90] The British records corroborate this information. In March 1933, a group of Boy Scouts and six teachers were allowed to visit Kuwait, even though the ruler and Political Agent suspected that the "object of… [their] visit to Kuwait is for anti-British or pan-Arab propaganda."[91] The Political Agent added: "just now there seems to be a recrudescence of the movement here, (emanating from Iraq, I think) to discredit the British and forward the pan Arab idea."[92] The troop spent two days in Kuwait "without untoward incident."[93]

An occurrence in August 1933 points to the existence of coordination between the nationalist activists in Kuwait and Iraq. During the conflict between the Iraqi army and Assyrian separatists, pamphlets attacking the Assyrians and the British were anonymously distributed in Kuwait's suq.[94] The conflict had no direct bearing on the shaykhdom but was wildly popular among Iraq's Arab nationalists,[95] suggesting that those who distributed the pamphlets in Kuwait adhered to this ideology. It is possible that they were members of al-Shabiba al-Kuwaitiyya.

The Palestinian Connection

The activism of al-Shabiba al-Kuwaitiyya quickly came to focus on the Palestinian issue, which became an important "factor in the internal political development of Kuwait"

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[89] Fadil Husain, "Jamᶜiyyat al-Jawwal: Fasl min Tarikh al-Qawmiyya al-ᶜArabiyya fi al-ᶜIraq al-Muᶜasir," *Majallat Kulliyat al-Adab* 33, no. 2 (Dec 1982), 246-249.
[90] Ibid., 282.
[91] IOR/R/15/5/126: Dickson to PR, 16/3/1933.
[92] IOR/R/15/5/126: Dickson to Special Service Officer, 16/3/1933.
[93] IOR/R/15/5/126: Dickson to PR, 28/3/1933.
[94] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Dickson to PR, 26/8/1933.
[95] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 112-113.

over the coming years.[96] At this time, the Palestinian issue was emerging as a rallying point for Arab nationalist opinion. Amin al-Husaini, Mufti of Jerusalem and President of the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC), began to appeal to Arab and Muslim countries in the 1920s in order to counter the international support received by the Zionists.[97] An early manifestation of this policy, discussed in the previous chapter, was the SMC's sending of fundraising delegations to various countries including Kuwait in 1924.

In November of 1933, the "'Shabibat Al Kuwaitiyeh' (Youngmen of Kuwait)" sent a letter to the Political Agent. It expressed "sharp protest against His Majesty's Government's methods towards our brothers, the Arabs of Palestine," and warned the British that they would incur the ill will of all Arabs and Muslims.[98] The al-Shabiba group appears to have had a close relation with prominent notables, including both Islamic modernists and Arab nationalists. In early 1934, "some of the leading merchants and the 'shabeebat' (youngmen) of Kuwait" held a fundraiser for "the 'Distressed' of Palestine" at the residence of the longtime Arab nationalist merchant ʿAbd al-Rahman Khalaf al-Naqib. The event angered Shaykh Ahmad, who had not been told about it, prompting him to order the return of the 2,500 rupees collected.[99]

In 1936 the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in Palestine shook the Arab world, leading to the intensification of pro-Palestinian, Arab nationalist activism in Kuwait. As Porath argues, "the effect of the developments in Palestine during the 1936-9 years stands as perhaps the single most important factor which contributed to the growth of Pan-Arab ideology."[100] The Palestinians formed the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) to lead the revolt, and elected Amin al-Husaini as its president. The committee requested support from

[96] Zahlan, "Palestinian Problem," 1.
[97] Mattar, 56-57.
[98] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Dickson to PR, 30/11/1933.
[99] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 1-15 January 1934.
[100] Porath, 162.

various Arab rulers, including the Shaykh of Kuwait. Zahlan explains that unlike other Gulf states, Britain's treaty "with Kuwait… did not restrict the ruler there from corresponding with other powers." This allowed Shaykh Ahmad to communicate freely with the Palestinian leadership.[101]

The Kuwaiti ruler, however, was at first not an enthusiastic supporter of the Palestinian cause, and it took the pressure of the merchant opposition to goad him into action. The campaign of the merchants was such that Kuwait became "the most active place" in the Gulf in supporting the Arab Revolt.[102] Zahlan correctly attributes this to the merchants' intensified connections to the Arab world. However, she portrays this as a new development that occurred in the 1930s, and appears unaware of the long history of interaction with Palestinian activists such as Amin al-Husaini and Muhammad ʿAli al-Tahir dating back to the 1920s.[103] Both these figures continued to serve as key points of contact with the Kuwaitis, demonstrating the continuity and overlap between the Arab nationalist and Islamic modernist networks.

In June of 1936, the Kuwaiti ruler received the first of many cables from the Palestinian leadership. Shaykh Ahmad turned down the appeal for funds,[104] and prohibited his subjects from engaging in public subscriptions in support of the revolt. Nonetheless, a Basra newspaper announced in July that it had raised 200 Iraqi dinars in donations from Kuwait.[105] In the same month, the AHC issued further appeals for assistance to the shaykh, who took no action.[106] Amin al-Husaini again cabled the ruler in September inquiring if he would participate in mediating between the Palestinians and the British, to which "he

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[101] Zahlan, "Palestinian Problem," 2-3.
[102] Ibid., 15.
[103] Zahlan, *Palestine and the Gulf,* 4-16.
[104] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 1-30 June 1936.
[105] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 1-15 July 1936.
[106] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 16-31 July 1936.

replied politely in non-committal sense." The Political Agent noted, however, that there was "much strong feeling and… sympathy" towards the Palestinians in Kuwait.[107]

In October, the merchants openly acted upon this "strong feeling," flouting Shaykh Ahmad's restrictions by forming a fundraising committee for Palestine. Its members were a mix of old and venerable notables and more youthful merchants: Yusuf bin ᶜIsa al-Qinaᶜi, Ahmad al-Humaiḍi, Muhammad Thunayyan al-Ghanim, ᶜAbd al-Rahman al-Bahar, Sayyid ᶜAli bin Sayyid Sulaiman al-Rifaᶜi, and Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghanim. The committee convened a meeting of 150 people in which speeches were delivered. 7500 rupees were raised, and Iraqi lottery tickets for the assistance of the Palestinians were also sold. A daughter of the late opposition leader Hamad al-Saqr even donated a building she owned in the town suq.[108] The Political Resident observed that the "Sheikh, who would have incurred serious odium had he tried to interfere, left for hunting shortly before the meeting."[109]

Kuwaiti enthusiasm for the Palestinian cause was no doubt further stoked by the visit in December 1936 of a four-man AHC delegation, en route from Iraq to Riyadh. It was led by the prominent Arab nationalist Muhammad ᶜIzzat Darwaza. During their three-day stay, the men met with the ruler, who expressed his sympathy for the Palestinian cause according to Darwaza. They also met with Kuwaiti notables and youth, whom Darwaza recalls "displayed intelligence and knowledge of letters and poetry," and visited the Mubarakiyya School.[110]

In July of 1937, the merchants resumed their campaign by sending telegrams to the League of Nations and British government protesting the Peel Commission's recommendation to partition Palestine. According to the Political Agent, the telegrams were

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[107] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 1 August - 30 September 1936.
[108] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 1-15 October 1936.
[109] IOR/L/P&S/12/3351: PR to Secretary of State for India, 9/10/1936.
[110] Muhammad ᶜIzzat Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat Muhammad ᶜIzzat Darwaza*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1993), 344-352.

signed by "Ash Shubab Al-Kuwait - the youth of Kuwait."[111] Both Zahlan and Al-Mdairis render this grammatically incorrect name as "Shabab al-Kuwait," though it is safe to assume that it was in fact "al-Shabiba al-Kuwaitiyya." Both authors appear to be unaware of the earlier activism carried out under this name.[112] The twelve subscribers to the telegram included the members of the 1936 committee with the exception of Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghanim. They were joined by Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr, ᶜAbd al-Muhsin al-Khrafi, Khalifa Shahin al-Ghanim, Ahmad al-Ghanim, Khalid al-Zaid, and Mashᶜan al-Khudair. Again, the Political Agent observes that the ruler knew of the telegrams but chose not to intervene.[113]

When the ruler received yet another appeal for help from the AHC in August, a deputation of merchants convinced him to personally voice his support for the cause. He sent a telegram protesting against the situation in Palestine to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, and cables of support to the Saudi and Iraqi rulers, who were then preparing a joint Arab demarche on the Palestine issue.[114] In October, Shaykh Ahmad once again proved obliging when he received a letter from Amin al-Husaini "inviting him to select from a list of names of Arab notables enclosed" a delegate to represent him at the Bludan Conference in Syria.[115] This meeting was organized by al-Husaini and Syrian Arab nationalists to rally regional support for the Palestinian cause. Attempts to secure official participation by Arab governments largely failed.[116] It was all the more notable, therefore, that the Kuwaiti ruler delegated the former Iraqi Prime Minister Naji al-Suwaidi, a

[111] IOR/L/P&S/12/3351: PA to PR, 26/7/1937.
[112] Al-Mdairis, *Malamih Awaliyya,* 7; Zahlan, "Palestinian Problem," 7.
[113] IOR/L/P&S/12/3351: PA to PR, 26/7/1937.
[114] IOR/L/P&S/12/3351: Fowle to Clauson, 4/8/1937; Porath, 165.
[115] IOR/L/P&S/12/3351: PR to Secretary of State for India, 21/10/1937.
[116] Porath, 168-169.

moderate Arab nationalist,[117] to represent him. This led the Political Agent to reprimand him for exceeding his authority under the treaty of protection.[118] That Shaykh Ahmad would thus risk his good relations with the British attests to the effectiveness of the merchants' campaign, which succeeded over the course of a few years in forcing the once defiant ruler to bow to popular opinion on this issue.

The merchants' pro-Palestinian campaign between 1933 and 1937 represented a significant development in the evolution of political activism in Kuwait. Zahlan argues that it contributed directly to the emergence of the 1938 Majlis Movement by strengthening the merchant's esprit de corps and intensifying their opposition to the ruler.[119] The campaign also introduced new modes of activism such as mass meetings, cables of protest, and underground political organization. As occurred in the 1910s and 1920s, practical and organizational innovations accompanied the novel ideological influences percolating into the country.

Cross-Regional Activism: The Kuwait Branch of the Red Book Group

As the Kuwaiti merchants engaged in pro-Palestine activism, they developed organizational links with Arab nationalist activists elsewhere in the region. This eventually led to the establishment of a local branch of the Red Book Group, the transnational Arab nationalist organization based in Beirut and subsequently Baghdad. Kuwaiti membership of this avowedly secular group provides clear evidence for the Arab nationalist current's independence from the pre-existing Islamic modernist movement. Furthermore, it demonstrates that the Kuwaiti merchants' regional political networks had expanded beyond Iraq and Palestine to reach Syria and Lebanon. It is unclear how the merchants became

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[117] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 62.
[118] IOR/L/P&S/12/3351: PR to Secretary of State for India, 21/10/1937; deGaury to Caroe, 2/11/1937.
[119] Zahlan, *The Making,* 37; Zahlan, "Palestinian Problem," 9.

affiliated with the Red Book Group, and existing accounts date this membership to anywhere between the group's founding in 1935 and 1940. However, it will be argued that this affiliation had become established by early 1938, when the Red Book Group's Secretary General Kazim al-Sulh visited Kuwait.

Most accounts converge on the importance of Baghdad's Muthanna Club as a point of contact between the Kuwaiti merchants and regional nationalist networks. As has been stated, Arab nationalist activists established this club in 1935 as a platform for disseminating their ideology. It played a key role in organizing Iraqi support for Palestine, and was closely tied to Arab émigré circles in Baghdad and Arab nationalist groups abroad.[120] The club would have been easily accessible to Kuwaiti merchants and students in Iraq.

One account presented by Hashim holds that ᶜAbd al-Hamid al-Saniᶜ, Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, and Hamid al-Naqib were the first Kuwaitis to establish ties with the Muthanna Club. They subsequently formed "a cell which opened communication between the nationalist groups in Iraq and the opposition movement in Kuwait in 1936." Hashim bases this narrative on an interview with al-Saniᶜ.[121] Al-Mdairis, on the other hand, holds that the merchants' ties to the club began following a trip by ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr and ᶜAbd al-Latif Thunayyan al-Ghanim to Baghdad. The two opposition leaders then went on to visit the nationalist Arab Club of Damascus. Al-Mdairis bases this account largely on an interview he conducted with al-Ghanim. He does not provide a date for this visit, but places it sometime before the upsurge in pro-Palestinian activism in Kuwait in October 1936.[122]

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[120] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 64-66; Porath, 164, 169; Wien, 32-34, 106-107.
[121] Hashim, 74.
[122] Al-Mdairis, *Malamih,* 7.

However, given that the Arab Club of Damascus was not opened until early 1937, the trip probably in fact occurred after this date.[123]

A third source on Kuwaiti contact with the Muthanna Club, and Arab nationalist networks more broadly, is H.R.P. Dickson, who served as British Political Agent (1929-1936) and subsequently worked for the Kuwait Oil Company.[124] Dickson's tenure as Political Agent corresponds with the period of al-Shabiba al-Kuwaitiyya's activity. It is perhaps for this reason that he appears to exaggerate its role, associating it with all cross-regional Arab activism involving Kuwaitis. He relates that sometime before the onset of the Majlis Movement in 1938, Kuwaiti activists joined a transnational underground movement known as "Al Shabiba". Established in Syria in the late 1920s, it later transferred its headquarters to Iraq, where it received government support and adopted the Muthanna Club as its headquarters. Al Shabiba sought to liberate the Arab states from colonialism and unify them. Mirroring the account of Al-Mdairis, Dickson states that Kuwaiti activists joined the group after a trip to Baghdad and Damascus. Upon returning, they became active in opposing the British presence and working for the Palestinian cause. Dickson also alleges that they received German support.[125]

Although Dickson's transnational Shabiba movement is not mentioned in any of the literature on Arab nationalist groups, his description of it corresponds closely to the Red Book Group. Like Dickson's Shabiba, the Red Book Group originated in the Levant (albeit in Lebanon rather than Syria) and then transferred its headquarters to Iraq. This occurred between late 1939 and early 1940.[126] Furthermore, as in Dickson's account, the group adopted the Muthanna Club as its headquarters and enjoyed close relations with the Iraqi

[123] Khoury, 564.
[124] Dickson, 9.
[125] Ibid., 450; al-Jasim, *al-Tatawwur al-Siyasi,* 155.
[126] Jeha, 249-250.

government.[127] The only notable difference is that Dickson's Shabiba movement was established around the late 1920s, whereas the Red Book Group was founded in 1935. Given the extreme secrecy of the latter, it would have been easy for Dickson to make such mistakes, and conflate the local branch of the Red Book Group with the pre-existing al-Shabiba al-Kuwaitiyya.

The publication of a study on the Red Book Group in 2004 by Shafiq Jeha, a former member of the organization and an AUB history professor, confirmed the existence of a Kuwaiti branch of the group. Internal party documents dating from around 1940 list ʿAbd Allah al-Saqr as head of the branch, while the remaining officers included (in order of rank): ʿAbd al-Latif Thunayyan al-Ghanim, Khalid Sulaiman al-ʿAdsani, and Sarhan al-Sarhan.[128] Yusuf al-Ghanim is listed as a member, as is a Muhammad al-Ghanim in Aden, who was probably a Kuwaiti merchant resident in that port.[129] Jeha relates little else about the Kuwaiti branch apart from that it was established in 1940 (an improbable claim as shall be seen), and that the scanty references to it in the party documents suggest that it was small and inactive.[130] There are reasons to doubt Jeha's characterization. As Al-Mdairis observes, Jeha himself stresses that it is very hard to determine the full extent of the Red Book Group's activities due to its extreme secrecy and the fact that the vast majority of its documents were destroyed. This applies especially to branches outside the Fertile Crescent, which he discusses only briefly.[131] He dedicates by far the least attention to Kuwait, and demonstrates no awareness of internal developments within the shaykhdom at the time.

Following the unearthing of the party documents on which Jeha based his work, certain scholars have drawn connections between the Arab nationalist activism that

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[127] Ibid., 250-255.
[128] Ibid., 29, 49-51.
[129] Ibid., 444; al-Wuqayyan, *al-Qadiyya al-ʿArabiyya,* 118.
[130] Jeha, 329, 334.
[131] Ibid., 14-30, 58-60; Al-Mdairis, "al-Saqr wa-l-ʿAdsani wa-l-Ghanim."

occurred in Kuwait in the 1930s and the Red Book Group. Apparently, the first to do so was Youssef Choueiri. He seeks to explain Kuwaiti membership of the group through Al-Mdairis's account of the visits of al-Saqr and al-Ghanim to the Muthanna Club and the Arab Club of Damascus. These two "frontal societies" of the Red Book Group could have provided the avenue for the Kuwaiti merchants' recruitment into the organization.[132] In a later article, Al-Mdairis conjectures that the Kuwaiti branch of the group was responsible for the pro-Palestine activism carried out under the names of "Shabab al-Kuwait" and the October 1936 Committee. He points to the coincidence of the onset of this activism with the founding of the Red Book Group in Beirut 1935.[133] Al-Mdairis, however, does not take into account the pre-existing al-Shabiba al-Kuwaitiyya, which commenced activism on behalf of Palestine in 1933, well before the Red Book Group was established.

While it is unclear when the Kuwaiti merchants established a branch of the Red Book Group, it is clear that they established direct contact with its leadership by March 1938, when a delegation comprised of Kazim al-Sulh and Fakhri al-Barudi visited Kuwait via Iraq to procure weapons for Palestine's Arab Revolt.[134] The former, a Lebanese, served as Secretary General of the Red Book Group throughout its existence.[135] The latter was a leader of the principal Syrian opposition group, al-Kutla al-Wataniyya (the Patriotic Bloc), and though not a Red Book Group member, he had a similar ideological outlook and worked closely with some of its cadres.[136] The British denied entry visas to at least two

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[132] Choueiri, 94.
[133] Al-Mdairis, "al-Saqr wa-l-ʿAdsani wa-l-Ghanim."
[134] Akram Zuʿaitir, *Yawmiyyat Akram Zuʿaitir: al-Haraka al-Wataniyya al-Filastiniyyah 1935-1939* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyyah, 1980), 361-363; IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 23/3/1938; IOR/R/15/5/162: As Sijjil, 11/3/1938.
[135] Jeha, 48.
[136] Ibid., 30, 130, 133.

other men, the Palestinian activists Akram Zuᶜaitir and Rashad al-Shawwa.[137] The latter was also a high-ranking member of the Red Book Group.[138]

According to the Iraqi press, the Kuwaiti government banned a public meeting in honor of the guests that had been planned by young activists, arresting some of them when they insisted on carrying out their plan.[139] The ruler also refused to allow Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir "to be the President of a collecting committee."[140] Despite these setbacks, Zuᶜaitir relates that the delegation achieved its goal of obtaining weapons, receiving the assistance of ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr and another merchant by the name of Muhammad Yusuf al-Ghanim.[141] Perhaps as a result of merchant pressure, Shaykh Ahmad agreed to turn a blind eye to the purchase of the arms, and his secretaries Mulla Salih and ᶜIzzat Jaᶜfar actively helped the delegates.[142] Al-Sulh's interaction with al-Saqr and other Kuwaiti notables during this 1938 visit may have provided the opportunity for the establishment of the Red Book Group's Kuwait branch.[143]

A further account suggests that the visit of al-Sulh and al-Barudi resulted in some form of organizational coordination between the Levantine and Kuwaiti activists, possibly under the umbrella of the Red Book Group. The son of the merchant Sultan al-Kulaib related in an interview that his father was approached by al-Sulh and al-Barudi in Kuwait. They proposed that a local committee be formed to collect funds and arms for Palestine. Al-Kulaib's son appears to suggest that there had been prior contact between his father and the two men, as al-Kulaib had visited Lebanon and Syria, in addition to Cairo and

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[137] Zuᶜaitir, 361; IOR/R/15/5/162: As Sijjil, 11/3/1938. The British Political Agent reported that he refused entry to "four Palestinians without travel papers." IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 4/4/1938.
[138] Jeha, 46, 441.
[139] IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 23/3/1938.
[140] IOR/L/P&S/12/3351: deGaury to Fowle, 20/3/1938.
[141] There is no mention of a Muhammad Yusuf al-Ghanim in the consulted sources. It is possible that Zuᶜaitir actually meant Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghanim or Yusuf Ahmad al-Ghanim.
[142] Zuᶜaitir, 363.
[143] A similar point is argued in Al-Mdairis, "al-Saqr wa-l-ᶜAdsani wa-l-Ghanim."

Palestine, after performing the hajj in 1934. A committee was formed with al-Kulaib and the merchants Yusuf Ahmad al-Ghanim and Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf as members. It collected donations and bought arms for the Palestinians from an Indian merchant.[144] Though this account does not mention the Red Book Group, Jeha lists Yusuf al-Ghanim as a member of the organization. In addition, the former teacher and MAN activist Muhammad al-Saddah holds that al-Nisf was a member of the Red Book Group.[145]

A final possibility is that the Kuwaiti Branch of the Red Book Group was founded in 1940 as Jeha asserts. Though he does not provide any justification for this argument, he probably bases it on the fact that the party documents he uses, which list the Kuwaiti members, date from around 1940.[146] This would mean that the Kuwaiti merchants joined the group as exiles in Iraq following the ruler's suppression of the Majlis Movement in March of 1939. Many Kuwaiti activists including al-Saqr and al-ᶜAdsani subsequently sought refuge in Basra and Baghdad. They continued their activism there with the support of the Iraqi authorities and radical Arab nationalist activists, and were in close contact with the Muthanna Club.[147] Jeha's claim, however, is undermined by the fact that the second-in-command within the Kuwaiti branch, ᶜAbd al-Latif Thunayyan al-Ghanim, was imprisoned in Kuwait during the March 1939 crackdown.[148] He was not released until April 1944, and thus could not have been in Iraq in 1940 to assume his position.[149] It is thus most likely that the Kuwait branch of the Red Book Group was founded in early 1938 or sometime before that.

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[144] Al-Khrafi, 1211.
[145] Muhammad al-Saddah, Interview by Talal Al-Rashoud, Personal Interview, Kuwait, 24/2/2013. The context of al-Saddah's claim will be discussed subsequently.
[146] Jeha, 439.
[147] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 16-31 March 1939; IOR/R/15/5/126: Air Liaison Officer to Air Staff Intelligence, 10/2/1939.
[148] IOR/L/P&S/12/3894A: Jeddah to FO, 22/12/1943; IOR/R/15/5/206: PA to Fowle, 1/7/1939.
[149] IOR/R/15/1/719: Administration Report 1944, 3.

At the same time that the Kuwaiti merchants were engaging in their pan-Arab activism, they were closely involved in a domestic endeavour: the founding of elected administrative councils. Through these institutions, the merchants aimed to take charge of the development and modernization of the Kuwaiti state and follow in the footsteps of the more advanced Arab countries. The second of these councils, established in 1936, oversaw educational affairs. It will be argued that in developing and staffing Kuwait's nascent educational infrastructure, the merchants relied upon the same regional nationalist networks through which they carried out their activism.

The Birth of the Council System, 1930-1938

In the 1910s and 1920s, the novel ideological influence of Islamic modernism prompted a segment of Kuwait's merchants to initiate an unprecedented wave of charitable activity. They established the first modern schools and other establishments such as the Arab Charitable Association and the Ahliyya Library. Merchant committees administered and financed these projects, which the ruling family largely regarded with indifference or even hostility. Although this changed with the accession of Shaykh Ahmad al-Jabir in 1921, the merchants still contributed far more to these ventures than the ruler. The combined effect of the Great Depression, the collapse of the pearl trade, and the continued Saudi trade blockade of Kuwait rendered the merchants unable to sufficiently support these institutions, which went into decline.

As private funding for social welfare projects dried up, the merchants started to push the government to take responsibility for these functions. At the same time, they maintained and even expanded their administrative role through elected councils, starting with the Municipal Council of 1930 and the Educational Council of 1936. These institutions laid the foundations of the modern Kuwaiti state through the formation of

specialized government departments with legal regulations and independent budgets. This institutional infrastructure would remain in place even after the emergence of the rentier state, allowing the merchants to retain their administrative role well into the post-oil era.

The Educational Council in particular would remain a merchant stronghold until the mid 1950s. Arab nationalist and Islamic modernist merchants founded this institution with the goal of modernizing education on the model of the progressive Arab states, particularly Iraq. They relied upon their connections to various Arab activists and officials to develop Kuwait's new state educational system. While the Educational Council broadly oversaw the development of education, direct administration of this field became the preserve of Arab expatriates. The phase of Arab control over education in Kuwait began in 1936 with the deputation of teachers by the Palestinian SMC. This led to the growth of Arab nationalist influence within education.

The merchant's participation in the administrative councils, which occurred in parallel with their pro-Palestinian activism, also helped them to "[develop] a new sense of themselves as modern political actors."[150] The councils represented another step in the merchants' quest to institutionalize their customary role in governance, and contributed directly to the emergence of the Majlis Movement in 1938.

Kuwait's Municipal Council was established in 1930 following a merchant campaign led by the Islamic modernist scholar Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi and encouraged by the British Political Agent.[151] It was the first institution of its kind in Kuwait, with twelve voluntary members elected every two years. The electorate, however, was confined to merchants and notables. The councilmen elected a Municipal Director (*Mudīr al-*

[150] Crystal, 45.
[151] Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi, "al-Baladiyya fi al-Bahrain wa-l-Hukm al-Sharʿi," *al-Kuwait*, Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1348 AH, 272-276; IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1931, 59; IOR/R/15/1/714/6: Administration Report 1930, 55.

Baladīyya) from amongst themselves, while the office of President (*Raʾīs*) was permanently occupied by Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir (former head of the Literary Club). The institution was also the first in Kuwait with an independent budget, derived from a customs tariff and other taxes.[152]

Between 1930 and 1934 the reformist merchants dominated the Municipal Council. The post of Municipal Director was occupied by the Arab nationalist Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani.[153] Many of the councilmen had been leaders of the cultural initiatives of the 1910s and 1920s, and would become activists in the pro-Palestine campaign. There was also significant overlap in membership with both the 1921 Advisory Council and the future Legislative Council of 1938, reflecting the institution's importance in the evolution of participatory governance in Kuwait.[154] The Municipal Council's political effects were apparent from the year of its creation, when the Political Agent observed that it created "such a desire for improvements… that if anything it requires checking."[155] Khalid, son of Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, states in his memoirs that "the nucleus of the later patriotic movements was first created" within this council. A segment of its members developed "bonds of camaraderie and unified goals," and the institution resembled a "miniature parliament" due to its many responsibilities.[156] The council also eventually fueled merchant opposition to the ruler when he started to intervene in its affairs. Following its 1934 elections, he prevented Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani from being reelected as director, causing him to resign in protest.[157]

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[152] IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 8/7/1938; IOR/R/15/1/714/6: Administration Report 1930, 55; al-Jasim, *al-Tatawwur al-Siyasi,* 152-153.
[153] IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1932, 51.
[154] For a list of members see Najat ᶜAbd al-Qadir al-Jasim, *Baladiyyat al-Kuwait fi Khamsin ᶜAman* (Kuwait: Baladiyyat al-Kuwait, 1993), 37-38; al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*
[155] IOR/R/15/1/714/6: Administration Report 1930, 55.
[156] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*
[157] IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 8/7/1938; IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1934, 48; al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*

In early 1936, the reformist merchants sought to extend the model of the Municipal Council to the field of education, which was suffering greatly from the economic downturn. They met and decided to petition the ruler to form an Educational Council. Those present were Yusuf bin ᶜIsa al-Qinaᶜi, Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, Mashᶜan al-Khudair, Sayyid ᶜAli Sayyid Sulaiman, Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghanim, Sultan al-Kulaib, Mishari Hasan al-Badr, ᶜAbd Allah al-ᶜAsᶜusi and the new Municipal Director Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf.[158] Most were Islamic modernists or Arab nationalists. The ruler accepted the petition, and in the summer a large number of notables met at the Municipal Council to approve the measure.[159]

Elections to the Educational Council were held in October of 1936, with the reformists achieving a resounding victory. These were Yusuf bin ᶜIsa al-Qinaᶜi, ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr, Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, Mashᶜan al-Khudair, Sayyid ᶜAli bin Sayyid Sulaiman, Mishari al-Badr, Sultan al-Kulaib, and Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghanim. Ahmad al-Mishari, a close friend of the Islamic modernist scholar al-Rushaid, can also be classified within this group. The remaining members were Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf and Yusuf al-ᶜAdsani, who were close to the ruler, though the former was also an Arab nationalist as stated previously. Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir again became president of the body, while al-Qinaᶜi was appointed Director of Education.[160] The Educational Council assumed control over what was left of the educational infrastructure established by the Islamic modernists: the Mubarakiyya and Ahmadiyya schools, the Ahliyya Library, and the funds and waqf properties supporting them.[161] Like the Municipal Council, the Educational Council had an independent budget financed through a small tax on imported goods.[162] In 1937, the council

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[158] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 72-73.
[159] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 74; IOR/R/15/5/195: deGaury to PR, 23/4/1936.
[160] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 74-75; On al-Mishari's association with al-Rushaid see: al-Hijji, *al-Rushaid* 115, 183, 379, 481.
[161] Al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 75; Salih, Interview by Milaiji, 13.
[162] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Fowle, 16/1/1939; al-Nuri, *al-Taᶜlim,* 74.

acquired a more robust administrative apparatus and an internal law, marking the birth of the Educational Department ("Idarat al-Maᶜarif," later "Daᵓirat al-Maᶜarif").[163]

The reformist merchants established the Educational Council with the intent of furthering the process of Arabization of education that had commenced in the 1910s and 1920s. In his memoires, Khalid Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani ties the drive to establish the council to the influence of cultural and ideological developments in the Arab world. He states that ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr and Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghanim were among the most enthusiastic supporters of the project due to their close ties to Iraq.[164] In April 1936, when preparations for the council were still underway, the British reported that the merchants were seeking to recruit teachers from Iraq. However, the ruler, along with the British, feared that Iraqi teachers would have a pernicious political influence. He proposed that Syrian teachers be employed instead.[165] The Educational Council, however, was adamant that the teachers should be either Iraqi or Palestinian, and the ruler eventually assented to the employment of Palestinian teachers.[166]

Drawing on their longstanding Islamic modernist/Arab nationalist connections, the Educational Council members requested Amin al-Husaini's assistance in employing the teachers.[167] He promptly selected four men from the SMC's school network, and dispatched them to Kuwait in November. The most qualified of the group, Ahmad Shihab al-Din, became Director of Studies and played a central role in creating Kuwait's new educational system. This inaugurated a new phase in the development of education in Kuwait that will be treated in detail below.

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[163] ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir al-Sabah, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, *Rijal fi Tarikh al-Kuwait*, 187; al-Hatim, 86-87.
[164] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*
[165] IOR/R/15/5/195: deGaury to PR, 23/4/1936.
[166] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*. Al-ᶜAdsani differs from the British account, stating that the ruler favored the employment of Egyptian teachers due to the influence of his secretary ᶜIzzat Jaᶜfar, an Egyptian of Syrian origin. He claims that Jaᶜfar, a Freemason, intended to choose the teachers in consultation with the Masonic establishment in Egypt, but the Educational Council refused.
[167] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Secretariat, Jerusalem, 5/10/1936.

The accord between the ruler and the merchants that allowed for the formation of the Educational Council soon disintegrated in the face of the former's renewed meddling in the councils. In the spring of 1937, a dispute took place within the Educational Council over demands to raise the pay of Kuwaiti teachers. Members of the ruler's retinue took advantage of this to petition the ruler to dissolve the council. This he did, prompting the reformists on the Municipal Council and the committee in charge of the town's public library to resign in solidarity. Unmoved, Shaykh Ahmad arranged for the election of replacements.[168] He convinced the more politically conservative members to continue serving on the councils. Al-Qinaʿi was again appointed director of the Educational Council without elections being held. The remaining members, now reduced to six, were Sultan al-Kulaib, Ahmad al-Humaiḍi, Ahmad al-Mishari, Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf, ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Bahar, and ʿAbd al-Muhsin al-Khrafi.[169]

The final showdown between the merchants and the ruler over the councils occurred in early 1938, shortly before the Municipal Council elections were due to be held. The reformist merchants demanded that the ruler reform the council's elections procedure. Shaykh Ahmad responded by forbidding those who had previously resigned from running. He then blatantly rigged the elections, and threatened those who protested.[170] The ruler's conduct not only violated the traditional principle of consultation, but also hindered the merchants from conducting their modernizing reforms. The councils had given the reformist merchants a taste of democratic governance, and it offered much more promise than the ruler's corrupt and ineffectual administration. It was not long before the Majlis Movement emerged to demand the establishment of a council that would administer the entire country.

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[168] Al-ʿAdsani, *Nisf ʿAm,* 5; al-ʿAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*.
[169] Al-ʿAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*.
[170] Al-ʿAdsani, *Nisf ʿAm,* 5; al-ʿAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*

The Majlis Movement, 1938-1939

In the spring of 1938, an organized movement demanding parliamentary rule emerged in Kuwait. In short order, it established the Gulf's first elected legislative body, which virtually wrested power from the shaykh. Known as the Legislative Council (al-Majlis al-Tashriʿi), it represented the high point of the reformist merchants' activism. However, the opposition's ascendancy proved fleeting. By mid-1939, the shaykh had dissolved the council and returned to autocratic rule, though he retained many of its modernizing reforms.

Many accounts of the Majlis Movement treat it as a primarily internal development, disregarding the influence of Arab nationalism or relegating it to a mere footnote.[171] These works cannot fully explain how such a revolutionary, modern movement emerged in a still largely traditional context. To be sure, domestic factors were central to the movement, and not all of its protagonists were nationalists. However, it cannot be denied that Arab nationalism was its guiding ideology, and the nationalist element was its vanguard. Moreover, the movement was clearly an extension of the Arab nationalist activism that had been mounting since the beginning of the decade. Rather than giving a detailed account of the events surrounding the Majlis Movement, which have been more or less thoroughly covered in the existing literature, this section will focus on its Arab nationalist dimensions. Furthermore, it will demonstrate the prominence of educational reform within the movement's agenda.

By early 1938, Shakh Ahmad's rule was producing growing disaffection among Kuwait's merchants. Despite receiving substantial revenue from the 1934 oil concession,

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[171] Simon C. Smith, *Kuwait, 1950-1965: Britain, the al-Sabah, and Oil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8-14; Kamal Osman Salih, "The 1938 Kuwait Legislative Council," *Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no. 1 (Jan 1992); al-Rumaihi, "Harakat 1938," 29-41; Crystal, 44-61.

his administration was parsimonious and corrupt, and imposed burdensome taxes.[172] He also became increasingly authoritarian. As well as meddling in the councils, he severely punished dissenters, particularly after the Kuwaiti reformists began airing their grievances in the Iraqi press in around 1937.[173] Among them was ᶜAbd al-Hamid al-Saniᶜ, who in September of that year became Kuwait's first political prisoner after he criticized the British Political Agent in a Basra newspaper.[174] Another incident that aroused widespread indignation was the arrest and savage beating of the nationalist activist Muhammad al-Barrak, accused of fomenting a strike by taxi drivers and writing subversive graffiti.[175]

In the spring of 1938, a group of prominent merchants formed a secret society called the Patriotic Bloc (al-Kutla al-Wataniyya) with the goal of establishing parliamentary rule in Kuwait. Its twelve founding members were: ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Saqr, Mashᶜan al-Khudair, Sayyid ᶜAli bin Sayyid Sulaiman, Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, Khalid Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, ᶜAbd al-Latif Thunayyan al-Ghanim, Sultan al-Kulaib, Yusuf al-Marzuq, Yusuf al-Humaiḍi, and Hamad al-Humaiḍi. The venerable merchant Muhammad Thunayyan al-Ghanim was appointed its president. Although Arab nationalist and reformist elements dominated the group, al-ᶜAdsani accuses a few of its members of being motivated by personal interests.[176]

The Patriotic Bloc put forth its demands through the Iraqi press and handbills that it printed in Basra.[177] It enjoined the ruler to recognize the Kuwaiti people as the source of legitimacy, and form a council to aid him in governance. The people, it added, should control the state's resources and use them for the public good, and the ruler's corrupt

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[172] IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 5/11/1938; PA to PR, 8/7/1938; al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 13-15, 28-31.
[173] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Report, 16-31 December 1937.
[174] Hashim, 102.
[175] IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to Fowle, 13/6/1938; Fowle to Gibson, 12/5/1938; PA to PR, 19/3/1938; IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Report, 16-31 March 1938; al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*.
[176] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 6; al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*
[177] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 7.

retinue must be excluded from the administration. The Bloc also demanded the modernization and reform of the state, and the provision of basic services such as free healthcare and education.[178]

Educational reform figured prominently in the Patriotic Bloc's agenda. In its initial list of demands, which was published in an Iraqi newspaper, the first point called for "spreading education [widely]… so that the people of Kuwait would be given the same opportunities for education" as other Arabs.[179] A second list called for the provision of scholarships to Kuwaitis.[180] Articles that the Kuwaiti reformists wrote anonymously in the Iraqi press also strongly criticized the state of education in Kuwait, which they attributed to the ruler's neglect. One article was also careful to praise the efforts of the Palestinian teachers, pointing out that they had been employed at the initiative of the reformists in the Educational Council rather than the ruler.[181]

Other demands advanced by the Bloc were clearly inspired by Arab nationalism. These included the adoption of Iraqi administration methods in finance and education to allow Kuwait to "take part in the Arab renaissance (*nahḍa*)," and the signing of defense agreements with Arab states. In response to the aforementioned incident in which the British denied entry to visiting Palestinian activists, the Bloc also demanded that Kuwait have the right to issue its own visas and grant Arabs free admission. Moreover, it advocated that restrictions be placed on the immigration and employment of "foreigners,"[182] i.e. the many Persians who began migrating to Kuwait after the global economic downturn.[183] Al-ᶜAdsani complained that they not only took Kuwaitis' jobs, but also undermined the

[178] IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to Fowle, 24/6/1938; Az Zaman, 11/4/1938; Az Zaman, 3/4/1938.
[179] IOR/R/15/5/205: Az Zaman, 3/4/1938.
[180] IOR/R/15/5/205: Az Zaman, 11/4/1938.
[181] IOR/R/15/5/162: Al-Sejil, 27/5/1938; IOR/R/15/5/205: Al-Kifah, 12/2/1938.
[182] IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to Fowle, 24/6/1938; Az Zaman, 11/4/1938; Az Zaman, 3/4/1938.
[183] IOR/R/15/1/715: Administration Report 1932, 54.

country's language, customs, and Arab "national spirit."[184] Conflict with Kuwait's ethnic Persian community was to be a prominent feature of the Legislative Council's career.

The Arab nationalist character of the Majlis Movement is also revealed by the strong support it received from the Arab press. In the case of Iraq, the press's championing of the movement represented the culmination of the media campaign targeting Kuwait that had been ongoing since the early 1930s. However, support also came from further afield. A British report lists twenty-three Arabic newspapers that backed Kuwait's reformists and attacked the ruler. In addition to Iraq, these publications hailed from Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, and even Argentina.[185] This list, moreover, is by no means exhaustive. Among the newspapers not included were Cairo's *al-Shabab* and its successor *al-ᶜAlam*, both of which enthusiastically supported the Majlis Movement.[186] These were the latest periodicals published by the Palestinian journalist and activist Muhammad ᶜAli al-Tahir, whose ties to Kuwait date back to the 1920s.

It will be remembered that the modernist cleric al-Rushaid served as a correspondent for al-Tahir's *al-Shura*, to which other Kuwaiti writers also contributed. Kuwait's new generation of Arab nationalist activists appear to have maintained this relationship. This is indicated by al-Tahir's receipt of a cable of congratulations from ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr following his launch of *al-Shabab* in 1937.[187] As shall be seen, al-Tahir also helped recruit Palestinian teachers for Kuwait during the reign of the Legislative Council. The Arab press's support for the Majlis Movement was thus not only the result of Iraqi expansionist policy but also of the Kuwaiti reformists' own regional connections.

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[184] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 32.
[185] IOR/L/P&S/12/4584: Fowle to Peel, 8 July 1939.
[186] IOR/R/15/5/162: Al Chabab (Cairo), 29/3/1939; 23/3/1939; 15/3/1939; IOR/R/15/5/205: DeGaury to Fowle, 24/6/1938; Shabib, 167, 343.
[187] Shabib, 113, 331.

The Patriotic Bloc's campaign received support from unexpected quarters. Shaykh Ahmad's failure to delegate power to other members of the ruling family and the small salaries he paid them led some shaykhs to support the bloc's demands.[188] The leader of this faction was the ruler's longstanding rival Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Salim, who the British described as a man of "modern ideas."[189] Secondly, the British authorities recognized the need for serious reform, and pressured the ruler to "associate himself more both with his family and his people in his administration."[190] However, they only had in mind a consultative council, and apparently did not appreciate the extent of the Patriotic Bloc's ambitions and Arab nationalist inclinations.[191]

Under pressure from all sides, Shaykh Ahmad reluctantly acquiesced to the Patriotic Bloc's demands.[192] In late June 140 town notables were delegated to elect the fourteen-member Legislative Council. The successful candidates were: Muhammad Shahin al-Ghanim, Yusuf bin ᶜIsa al-Qinaᶜi, ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr, Mashᶜan al-Khudair, Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, Sayyid ᶜAli bin Sayyid Sulaiman, Mishari al-Badr, Sultan al-Kulaib, ᶜAbd al-Latif Thunayyan al-Ghanim, Yusuf al-Humaidi, Salih al-Rashid, Yusuf al-Marzuq, Muhammad al-Marzuq, and Khalid al-Hamad. The council then elected Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Salim as its president. All members were tied to the Patriotic Bloc or sympathetic to it.[193] Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Salim and the Patriotic Bloc took measures to exclude the ethnic Persians, both for nationalistic reasons and because of the community's close ties to the ruler's unpopular secretary Mulla Salih.[194]

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[188] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 1-15 August 1938; IOR/R/15/5/205: PR to Secretary of State for India, 18/6/1938; PA to PR, 19/3/1938.
[189] IOR/R/15/5/205: Fowle to Peel, 18/7/1938; IOR/R/15/5/179: Note on Kuwait in 1933, Dickson.
[190] IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to Fowle, 13/6/1938; Fowle to Gibson, 12/5/1938.
[191] IOR/R/15/5/205: PR to Shaikh Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, 18/6/1938.
[192] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 7-8; IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to Fowle, 29/6/1938.
[193] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 8-9; al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*; IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to Fowle, 6/7/1938; deGaury, A Note on the Elections, August 1938.
[194] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 8; IOR/R/15/5/205: Fowle to Gibson, 19/10/1938.

The Legislative Council swiftly asserted virtually complete control of power in what the British described as a "coup d'état."[195] It introduced a Basic Law that held that the nation (*umma*), represented by its elected council, is the source of all powers. The document also stipulated that the council must authorize all treaties and concessions, and allocated to it both legislative and executive authority.[196] The council exercised its executive power by distributing departmental portfolios to some of its members, and also took control of the revenue derived from the oil company and customs.[197] It also introduced a spate of reforms that aimed to modernize the state, cut corruption, and improve living standards.[198]

The Legislative Council also presided over a significant expansion in the educational system. Judging by the absence of any reference to the Educational Council during this period, it appears that the Legislative Council took over its functions, though this point is unclear. The council increased the Educational Department's budget, allocating to it half the income of the Landing Department. This enabled it to introduce free education. Furthermore, it established three new government schools, including the first modern school for girls.[199] Six additional Palestinian teachers, including two women, were employed to staff them. Al-ᶜAdsani holds that this contradicted the wishes of the ruler, who intended to dispense with the Palestinian teachers.[200] The council also obtained fully paid scholarships from the Iraqi and Egyptian governments, sending five students to Baghdad in late 1938 and four to Cairo in early 1939.[201]

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[195] IOR/R/15/5/205: Fowle to Peel, 18/7/1938; PR to Secretary of State for India, 16/7/1938.
[196] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 9-12; IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to Fowle, 12/7/1938; deGaury to Fowle, 6/7/1938.
[197] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 20, 25; IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 18/11/1938; Fowle to Peel, 29/10/1938.
[198] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 13-31, 34, 36; IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 5/11/1938.
[199] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 16-17; IOR/R/15/1/718: Administration Report 1938, 27; IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 5/11/1938.
[200] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 16.
[201] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 16-17; IOR/R/15/1/545: PA to PR, 4/2/1939; IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Fowle, 16/1/1939; PA to Fowle, 11/10/1938.

The Legislative Council also displayed its Arab nationalist colors by creating Kuwait's first officially sanctioned political organization: the Patriotic Youths' Bloc (Kutlat al-Shabab al-Watani). Around two hundred young men joined the group, electing a ten-member administrative committee. Ahmad al-Sarhan (brother of the Red Book Group member Sarhan al-Sarhan) served as the bloc's secretary, while the Legislative Council member ᶜAbd al-Latif Thunayyan al-Ghanim was appointed its honorary president.[202] The bloc's charter affirmed the unity and self-determination of the Arab nation and proclaimed Kuwait an inseparable part of it. It listed the following goals: strengthening ties between Arab states, supporting all social and economic initiatives beneficial to the Arabs, "awakening the national spirit," spreading "the spirit of Arab culture" in Kuwait, unifying the Kuwaiti youth, and supporting the "free and devoted among the Arabs."[203] The bloc formed committees for spreading Arab national awareness, holding literacy classes, and conducting charity work. It also had a club where it held weekly gatherings to "educate the masses about popular rights" and democracy.[204] The bloc also actively supported the Legislative Council against the ruler.[205]

The establishment of the Patriotic Youths' Bloc demonstrates the depth of the merchants' engagement with nationalist politics in the Arab world. It occurred at a time when youth groups were in vogue throughout the region, and the bloc echoes other contemporary nationalist groups. Choueiri thus compares its "principles and aims" to those of the Red Book Group and Syria's League of Nationalist Action.[206] An even more striking resemblance is overlooked in the existing literature. Shortly after Fakhri al-Barudi of

[202] The committee members were: Jasim al-Saqr, ᶜAbd al-Razzaq al-Basir, ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Rashid, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz ᶜAli al-Mutawwaᶜ, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Salih al-Mutawwaᶜ, ᶜAbd al-Rahman al-Faris, Muhammad al-ᶜAdsani, Muhammad al-Haj Habib, and ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Tabtabaᵓi. Ahmad al-Sarhan, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, *Rijal fi Tarikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. 1, 15-16; al-Hatim, 198; al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 23.
[203] Al-Mdairis, *Malamih Awaliyya,* 116-117.
[204] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Nisf ᶜAm,* 23.
[205] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*
[206] Choueiri, 97.

Syria's Patriotic Bloc (al-Kutla al-Wataniyya) visited Kuwait in March of 1938, the Kuwaiti merchant-activists adopted the same name for their underground group. Moreover, the Syrian Patriotic Bloc had a youth wing called the Patriotic Youth (al-Shabab al-Watani), which grew in prominence in the mid-1930s. At this point, members of the Red Book Group became very influential within this youth wing (though not within the Patriotic Bloc itself).[207] The resemblance in nomenclature between the Syrian and Kuwaiti organizations is uncanny, and cannot be dismissed as coincidence in light of the Kuwaitis' ties to al-Barudi and the Red Book Group. The Kuwaiti reformists appear to have been approaching the novel task of modern political organization by emulating the Syrian example.

Despite its initial success, opposition to the Legislative Council gradually mounted as the ruler and his entourage rallied their allies. These included ruling family members alarmed at the sudden power shift, rival merchants, disaffected supporters of the council, and the Persian community.[208] The council had spurned the latters' demands for special legal and educational facilities for the Shi^{c}a, and for communal representation on the Legislative and Municipal Councils.[209] Furthermore, the Persians felt threatened by certain actions and policies adopted by the council. These included a nationality law that restricted citizenship to those present in the country before the Great War, and a census that aimed to determine Kuwaitis from foreigners. Both measures were clearly aimed at recent migrants from Iran.[210]

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[207] Jeha, 139, 142-143.
[208] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 16-31 October 1938; IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to PR, 1/10/1938; PA to Weightman, 17/8/1938; PA to PR, 16/8/1938; PA to PR, 10/8/1938; deGaury to Fowle, 6/7/1938.
[209] IOR/R/15/5/205: Fowle to Gibson, 19/10/1938; PA to PR, 21/9/1938; al-^{c}Adsani, *Mudhakkirat*.
[210] Al-^{c}Adsani, *Nisf ^{c}Am,* 33; Idem, *Mudhakkirat*; IOR/L/P&S/12/3894A: deGaury to Fowle, 22/12/1938.

It was the British reassessment of their position towards the Legislative Council that tipped the balance of power in favour of the ruler. The British authorities were concerned that the body had too much power and was coming under Iraqi influence.[211] They also feared its regional impact after similar Majlis Movements sprang up in Dubai and Bahrain.[212] On the 15th of December 1938, the Political Agent told Shaykh Ahmad that he would not oppose the dissolution of the council.[213] Beginning the following day, a squabble over the arrest of one of the ruler's supporters quickly escalated, leading the country to the brink of civil war. The Patriotic Youths' Bloc and other council supporters occupied the town's arsenal, while the ruler called in tribal forces from the desert and surrounding villages.[214] The standoff eventually ended through arbitration, the two sides agreeing to dissolve the council and hold new elections. The ruler, however, would hold veto power over the new council.[215]

Elections to the second Legislative Council were held towards the end of December, and yielded a reformist majority despite Shaykh Ahmad's best efforts. Furthermore, the three anti-council merchants who were elected reconciled with the reformists. Of these, Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghanim and Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf were Arab nationalists who had participated in the merchants' pro-Palestine activism.[216] However, the ruler stipulated that the council could not assume its functions until he could agree with it on a new constitution. After much prevarication, Shaykh Ahmad refused the draft constitution

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[211] IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to PR, 1/10/1938; Gibson to Fowle, 30/9/1938; PA to PR, 9/8/1938.
[212] IOR/R/15/5/206: deGaury to Fowle, 27/2/1939.
[213] IOR/L/P&S/12/3894A: deGaury to Fowle, 22/12/1938.
[214] IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, Telegrams 404-408, 17/12/1938; al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*
[215] IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 18/12/1938.
[216] IOR/L/P&S/12/3894A: deGaury to Fowle, 27/12/1938; al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*.
Al-Nisf, who would later play a key role in reinforcing the Arab nationalist character of Kuwaiti education, was a notable from the Sharq quarter of Kuwait town. Its inhabitants were not represented on the first council, leading to resentment among them. Muhammad Mulla Husain, "al-Majlis al-Tashriᶜi 1938," in Khalid Saᶜud al-Zaid, *Muhammad Mulla Husain: Hayatuhu wa-Atharuhu* ([Kuwait?]: 1998), 193, 202; Abdulrahman Al-Ibrahim, "Constitutional Development and the Emergence of Modern Institutions in Kuwait, 1921-1962 [provisional title]" (PhD diss., University of Exeter, In progress).

submitted by the council. He submitted a draft of his own with the intention of dissolving the council if it did not approve it. True to the ruler's expectation, the council rejected his draft constitution.[217]

At the same time as this wrangling over the constitution unfolded, the reformists decided to turn to Iraq for assistance. In January of 1939, the British reported that "extreme Arab nationalists from Kuwait, Bahrain and Zubair" founded a "Bureau for propaganda in the 'Arabian Gulf'" in Basra. In early February, three of Kuwait's leading Arab nationalist activists: ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr, ᶜAbd al-Latif Thunayyan al-Ghanim, and Muhammad al-Barrak, travelled to Iraq to rally support for their cause. They were warmly welcomed by the Iraqi government, and met with activists, politicians, and officials including Rashid ᶜAli al-Kailani.[218] After their arrival, the Iraqi newspapers and King Ghazi's personal Qasr al-Zuhur radio station intensified their propaganda in support of the Legislative Council and against the Kuwaiti ruler.[219]

A British report holds that during their visit, al-Saqr and his comrades advocated unity between Kuwait and Iraq.[220] Muhammad al-Barrak is also reported to have written an article in an Iraqi newspaper in which "he says that Iraq should take Kuwait under its protection," adding "Kuwait is the natural harbour and the backbone of Iraq."[221] The Majlis Movement's position on unity with Iraq has been a sensitive topic in contemporary scholarship. While some Kuwaiti scholars downplay or question the movement's desire for unity,[222] those from Iraq exaggerate it based on an uncritical reading of contemporary Iraqi

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[217] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 16-28 February 1939; IOR/R/15/5/206: deGaury to Fowle, 19/2/1939; al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*.
[218] IOR/R/15/5/126: Air Liaison Officer to Air Staff Intelligence, 10/2/1939.
[219] IOR/R/15/5/206: deGaury to Fowle, 19/2/1939.
[220] IOR/R/15/5/126: Air Liaison Officer to Air Staff Intelligence, 10/2/1939.
[221] IOR/R/15/5/162: Al Istiklal 23/2/1939.
[222] Al-Jasim, *al-Tatawwur al-Siyasi,* 157; al-Rumaihi, "Harakat 1938," 35-36.

media accounts.[223] It is clear that at least some key figures within the movement held this view. Al-Saqr appears to have held this position from early on; Akram Zuᶜaitir's diary entry on his attempted visit to Kuwait in March 1938 reports that al-Saqr "calls for unity between Kuwait and Iraq."[224]

What is unclear is the proportion of the Kuwaiti merchant opposition that shared this goal. The British estimated that only between ten and eighty Kuwaitis, led by al-Saqr, sought unity with Iraq.[225] Al-ᶜAdsani attests to the existence of a hard core of Arab nationalists within the Majlis Movement. He recalls that ᶜAbd Allah al-Saqr, ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Ghanim, and himself formed a "triad" of committed nationalists that met separately and was able to influence the rest of the movement.[226] Even if not everyone in the Majlis Movement sought outright unity with Iraq, it is safe to say that a broad majority favored close cooperation with it. This is indicated by the fact that in early March, the Legislative Council sent letters to King Ghazi and Prime Minister Nuri al-Saᶜid thanking them for their support.[227]

On the 7th of March, the ruler permanently dissolved the Legislative Council, accusing its members of conspiring with Iraq.[228] After this occurred, a council supporter, Muhammad al-Munayyis, arrived from Iraq and made a speech and distributed leaflets "declaring the Ruling family deposed." When the ruler's tribal retainers attempted to arrest him, the police officer Muhammad al-Qatami and the ex-council member Yusuf al-Marzuq fired upon them. The retainers returned fire, killing the former and wounding the latter. The

[223] Hashim, 127-130; al-Zaidi 173-175.
[224] Zuᶜaitir, 361.
[225] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 16-28 February 1939.
[226] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*.
[227] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat*.
[228] IOR/R/15/5/206: PA to PR, 7/3/1939.

ruler executed al-Munayyis for treason and hung his body in the main square.[229] He also imprisoned al-Marzuq and five council members, prompting many council supporters to flee to Iraq.[230] These bloody events sealed the fate of the Majlis Movement, ending the first phase of organized Arab nationalist activism in Kuwait.

Palestinian Teachers, Iraqi Curriculum, 1936-1942

By God, oh prophets of culture, tell us: how is our sister, oh brothers?
I mean Palestine, and how is her Amin and his soldiers, and the others?
After the struggle, and after the Jews spread their evil throughout her,
I heard her call, and the response of the lions among the sons of ᶜAdnan,
And the roar of the lion cubs of Arabism, the relentless sons of Ghassan

- *"Hayy al-Asatidha al-Kiram Tahiyya (Greetings to the Honorable Teachers)," Fahad al-ᶜAskar, 1936*[231]

In November of 1936, a group of Kuwaitis congregated in the northern village of Jahra to receive the shaykhdom's first Palestinian teachers, who were arriving via motorcar from Iraq. In addition to educational officials and notables, the welcoming party included young activists such as Khalid al-ᶜAdsani, Muhammad al-Barrak, and Ahmad al-Sarhan, all fervent Arab nationalists and future leaders of the Patriotic Youths' Bloc.[232] The prominent young poet Fahad al-ᶜAskar composed a poem welcoming the teachers, a portion of which is quoted above. These verses indicate that the teachers were esteemed as educators or "prophets of culture," i.e. the modern, progressive culture of the more advanced Arab countries. At the same time, they were welcomed as representatives of Amin al-Husaini, the Palestinian struggle, and the Arab nation. The dual capacity of the Palestinian teachers

[229] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 1-15 March 1939.
[230] IOR/R/15/5/206: PA to Fowle, 1/7/1939; PA to PR, 10/3/1939.
[231] ᶜAbd Allah Zakaria al-Ansari, *Fahad al-ᶜAskar: Hayatuhu wa-Shiᶜruh* (Kuwait: al-Rubaiᶜan, 1997), 123. ᶜAdnan: progenitor of the northern Arabs. Ghassan: an Arab tribal group that ruled a Christian kingdom in the Levant in pre-Islamic times. W. Caskel, "ᶜAdnān," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et. al. http://www.brillonline.nl/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/adnan-SIM_0331 (accessed 1/4/2016); Irfan Shahid, "Ghassān," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* http://www.brillonline.nl/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ghassan-SIM_2472 (accessed 1/4/2016).
[232] S. al-Shihab, Vol. 1, 120.

in the poem represents the extent to which education and Pan-Arab politics were intertwined. Although this link was already apparent in the previous period, when Islamic modernists established Kuwait's first modern schools, education became much more politicized under the new Palestinian administration.

Between 1936 and 1942, three factors contributed to an unprecedented rise in Arab nationalist influence within Kuwait's nascent Educational Department. The first was the role of the nationalist merchant activists, who oversaw education through the Educational Council and the short-lived Legislative Council. Secondly, from 1936, the merchants largely delegated the technical and day-to-day administration of the Educational Department to the Palestinian teachers, who they recruited through their Arab nationalist networks. The Palestinian teachers increased awareness of Arab nationalism and the Palestinian cause through various means including Scouting, extracurricular activities, and social interaction with their students and colleagues. They were also responsible for the third primary factor behind the spread of Arab nationalist influence during this period: the importation of the Iraqi curriculum.

The creation of the Educational Council and the arrival of the Palestinian teachers in 1936 represented a pivotal development in the "Arabization" and modernization of Kuwaiti education. Education now became officially regulated, undergoing increasing standardization and centralization. It expanded significantly as the resources of the state allowed for the introduction of free education and the building of new schools. Furthermore, control over education passed from the ʿulamaʾ to the secular, westernized *effendiyya*. Moreover, the appointment of a Palestinian Director of Studies in 1936 marked the start of a sixteen-year period when Arab expatriates largely oversaw the administration of education in Kuwait.

The manner in which the Educational Council employed its first Palestinian teachers, which has already been briefly outlined, clearly demonstrates the link between the merchants' Arab nationalist activism and their educational endeavors. Their decision to request Amin al-Husaini's assistance in October of 1936 was no doubt made in light of their longstanding ties to him, dating back to his 1924 visit to Kuwait. This relationship had been further strengthened through the merchants' pro-Palestine activism, which was in full swing at the time. Moreover, al-Husaini was then gaining prominence across the region as an Arab nationalist, anti-imperialist leader. As president of the Arab Higher Committee since April 1936, he was at the head of the Arab Revolt then taking place against the British in Palestine.[233]

The Educational Council approached al-Husaini in his capacity as President of the SMC, an institution that simultaneously enjoyed nationalist legitimacy and British recognition. Seeking to placate the Palestinians with a limited form of self-government, the British Mandatory authorities established this popularly elected council in 1921 to oversee Muslim religious affairs. It was partly funded by the Mandatory government.[234] Al-Husaini became the SMC's first president in early 1922, and proceeded to use it as a base for his political activism.[235] One of the activities within the SMC's remit was religious education. Al-Husaini exploited this prerogative to create a substantial, "'national' (*waṭani*)" system of education, which paralleled that of the Mandatory state. Uri Kupferschmidt argues that the SMC sought to thereby counter the highly developed and "largely autonomous" system of Zionist schools. In 1936 the number of schools maintained or subsidized by the SMC

[233] Mattar, 70, 147.
[234] Kupferschmidt, 17-18, 172-174; Mattar, 28.
[235] Mattar, 28-30.

stood at 24, and included the prestigious and Arab nationalist-oriented Rawdat al-Maᶜarif of Jerusalem and the Najah School of Nablus.[236]

Given that the Arab Revolt was ongoing when the Educational Council contacted al-Husaini, it is surprising that the British had no objections to this exchange. However, Philip Mattar argues that contrary to his reputation as a militant nationalist, al-Husaini in fact cooperated with the Mandatory government until the eruption of the Arab Revolt in 1936.[237] His break with the British would therefore have been recent. More importantly, al-Husaini remained president of the officially recognized SMC until September of 1937.[238] The teachers he sent were thus not only citizens of a British Mandate but also employees of an institution that was subordinate to the Mandatory administration. During the disagreement between the Kuwaiti Educational Council and the ruler over whether to employ Iraqi or Syrian teachers, the British Political Resident in fact believed that Palestinian teachers would be a good alternative.[239] At around the same time, the British were also considering Palestine as a possible destination for Kuwaiti technical school students. The British authorities in Palestine even suggested the "Trade School of the Moslem Orphanage at Jerusalem," an SMC institution, as a possible option.[240]

Nevertheless, the British did not let their guard down, and investigated the four teachers al-Husaini nominated to the Kuwaiti Educational Council. They refused to grant a visa to one of these, Dhu al-Kifl ᶜAbd al-Latif, because he had been a leader of the "militia" youth wing of the Palestine Arab Party, headed by the al-Husaini family.[241]

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[236] Kupferschmidt, 139-143.
[237] Mattar, 141-147.
[238] Ibid., 83.
[239] IOR/R/15/5/195: Fowle to DeGaury, 30/5/1936. There is no evidence that the Political Resident's preference, expressed to the Political Agent, had any bearing on the decision to employ Palestinian teachers.
[240] IOR/R/15/5/195: Secretariat, Jerusalem to PA, 19/12/1936; PA to Secretariat, Jerusalem, 5/10/1936; DeGaury to PR, 23/4/1936. On the Islamic Orphanage see Kupferschmidt, 141-142.
[241] IOR/R/15/5/195: Secretariat, Jerusalem to PA, 30/10/1936; PA to Secretariat, Jerusalem, 5/10/1936; Mattar, 69.

Another teacher therefore replaced him. The head teacher in the group was Ahmad Shihab al-Din, a former classmate of ᶜAbd al-Latif in Baghdad's Dar al-Muᶜalimin between 1932 and 1934. The two had received scholarships provided by the Iraqi government to the SMC. Shihab al-Din then taught in Iraqi schools for two further years before returning to teach at the SMC's Dar al-ᶜUlum al-Islamiyya in Jaffa.[242] The remaining teachers sent to Kuwait had just obtained their secondary school degrees from Rawdat al-Maᶜarif, the flagship of the SMC's educational system. These were Muhammad Jabir Hadid, Muhammad al-Maghribi, and Khamis Najm.[243] The teachers were thus all graduates of institutions that were strongly Arab nationalist in character. Although the nature of their relationship to the SMC after arriving in Kuwait is unclear, Shihab al-Din states in an interview that they were seconded (*muntadab*).[244]

Almost immediately, the Palestinian teachers began transforming Kuwait's educational system, greatly advancing the processes of modernization and "Arabization" that had been underway since the 1910s. Shihab al-Din was appointed Mudir al-Taᶜlim (Director of Studies), and sat on the Educational Council. While the Council dealt with broad financial and administrative functions, Shihab al-Din undertook the day-to-day management of the schools, including the drafting of syllabi and timetables.[245] He recalls that upon arriving, the Council tasked him with bringing Kuwaiti education in line with that of the Arab countries to enable graduates of local schools to study there.[246] He held an examination for all the students, and determined that their standard did not surpass the fourth primary level according to the Iraqi system. Higher classes would gradually be

[242] Ahmad Shihab al-Din, "Ahmad Shihab al-Din al-Mukarram min al-Dawla Yarwi li-l-Qabas Rihlat al-ᶜUmr – 1," Interview by Ghada Farhat, *al-Qabas*, May 9, 2003; al-Khrafi, 662; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 123.
[243] IOR/R/15/5/195: Secretariat, Jerusalem to PA, 30/10/1936.
[244] Ahmad Shihab al-Din, "Mulhaq Khas," Interview, *al-Hadaf,* April 18, 1962.
[245] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940.
[246] Shihab al-Din, Interview by Farhat, Part 1.

added to the Mubarakiyya School, where all the Palestinian teachers taught.[247]

Perhaps the most significant decision made by Shihab al-Din was the "wholesale" adoption of the Iraqi curriculum, with its "ambitious" array of subjects and emphasis on ideological indoctrination at the expense of practical instruction.[248] Minor alterations were made in favor of other Arab curriculums, notably the Palestinian, whose English language curriculum was employed.[249] This was a clear case of what Gershoni describes as "exporting the revolution" of Iraqi Arab nationalist education through an Arab teacher educated and trained in Iraqi schools. It should also be noted that according to al-ᶜAdsani, most members of the Educational Council already favored the adoption of the Iraqi curriculum even before deciding to employ the Palestinian teachers.[250] The pro-Iraqi orientation of the councilmen al-Saqr and al-Ghanim has already been mentioned.

Kuwait's adoption of the Iraqi curriculum also reflected its growing educational ties with its northern neighbor. As detailed in the previous chapter, the modernization of schooling in the 1910s and 1920s allowed increasing numbers of Kuwaiti youth, mostly sons of merchants, to continue their education in Baghdad and Basra. In 1925, Kuwait's first scholarships were awarded to seven students to study in Iraq. The Legislative Council, it will be remembered, arranged for a further four scholarships to Baghdad in 1938.

By the end of the 1930s, Iraq hosted the majority of Kuwaiti students studying abroad. In mid-1938, the Political Agent reported that Kuwaitis studying at the expense of their families numbered thirteen in Iraq, four in Syria, six in India, and fourteen in Saudi Arabia.[251] Early the following year he listed ten students in Iraq, two in Beirut, eight in

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[247] Shihab al-Din, Interview by Farhat, Part 1; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 145-146.
[248] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940.
[249] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Fowle, 16/1/1939; Shihab al-Din, Interview by Farhat, Part 1; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 146.
[250] Al-ᶜAdsani, *Mudhakkirat.*
[251] IOR/R/15/5/205: PA to PR, 8/7/1938.

India, and one in Saudi Arabia, adding: "Iraq is already taking a dominant part in the education of the most intelligent Kuwait youths."[252] In 1940, the British Educational Adviser reported that "there are to my knowledge twenty-four Kuwaiti boys at present being educated abroad, most of them in 'Iraq."[253] Furthermore, the few Kuwaiti teachers with formal training were virtually all graduates of Iraqi schools. An example from the 1930s is Khalid al-Nasr Allah, who obtained his secondary degree from Iraq in 1934 and taught alongside the Palestinian teachers at the Mubarakiyya School in 1936.[254]

When the Legislative Council undertook its program of educational expansion in 1938, it sought four additional male Palestinian teachers, this time with university degrees. It employed two graduates of Egypt's Dar al-ᶜUlum, Muhammad Mahmud Najm and ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Salih, and two from the AUB, Zaki al-Dirhalli and ᶜUmar al-Dajani.[255] Furthermore, it engaged Wasifa ᶜUda to take charge of the new girls' school, aided by her sister Rafiqa. A third sister, Sukaina, joined them the following year.[256] Although these teachers were engaged privately without the SMC's assistance, the Educational Council members continued to rely on their Pan-Arab ties to recruit them. In an interview, the Dar al-ᶜUlum graduate Najm states that it was Muhammad ᶜAli al-Tahir who convinced him and his colleague al-Salih to take up their positions in Kuwait. Both men had close ties to this newspaper editor, whose longstanding ties to Kuwait and support for the Majlis Movement have already been mentioned. When a third wave of Palestinian teachers arrived in Kuwait in 1939, it included Muhammad ᶜAli al-Tahir's own nephew, Faisal Rashid al-Tahir.[257]

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[252] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Fowle, 16/1/1939.
[253] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940.
[254] Al-Khrafi, 676.
[255] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 168-170.
[256] Shihab al-Din, Interview by Farhat, Part 1.
[257] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 182.

Between 1939 and 1942, the number of male Palestinian teachers in Kuwait appears to have fluctuated between eight and six as various teachers left the country and new ones were employed.[258] This volatility in the staffing of the schools was mainly due to the lack of sufficient funding, which hampered the development of education in Kuwait.[259] As shall be seen, a financial dispute was behind the departure of the Palestinian teachers from Kuwait in 1942. There is also evidence of disaffection and possible infighting. In the spring of 1941, the teachers Najm and al-Salih published a three-part open letter to the Educational Council in an Egyptian newspaper. In it, they complained of a range of educational and administrative shortcomings, and recommended a series of reforms.[260] The female teachers, moreover, faced the added challenge of local cultural resistance to girls' education.[261] In the summer of 1940, a misunderstanding over issues of propriety led to the departure of the Palestinian sisters in charge of the female schools, who were replaced by teachers from Iraq and Syria.[262]

It is important to note that from 1939, the Palestinian teachers had to contend with increasing British intervention in Kuwaiti education, a response to the rise of Iraqi influence in the shaykhdom. The Political Resident articulated the British position in early 1939:

> On the type and quality of… [local] education will largely depend whether the young Kuwaiti of the future will become a good citizen, or a discontented agitator, a thorn in the flesh of the Shaikh and or ourselves. Youth Movements… have already

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[258] IOR/R/15/1/719: Administration Report 1942, 6; IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940; PA to Prior, 4/1/1940; Dundas to Prior, 15/11/1939.
[259] Ahmad Shihab al-Din, "Ahmad Shihab al-Din al-Mukarram min al-Dawla Yarwi li-l-Qabas Rihlat al-ᶜUmr – 2," Interview by Ghada Farhat, *al-Qabas,* May 10, 2003; IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940.
[260] ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Salih and Muhammad Mahmud Najm, "Hajat al-Taᶜlim fi al-Kuwait ila al-Islah – 1," *al-Rabita al-ᶜArabiyya,* January 22, 1941; al-Salih and Najm, "Hajat al-Taᶜlim fi al-Kuwait ila al-Islah – 2," *al-Rabita al-ᶜArabiyya,* February 5, 1941; al-Salih and Najm, "Hajat al-Taᶜlim fi al-Kuwait ila al-Islah – 3," *al-Rabita al-ᶜArabiyya,* February 12, 1941.
[261] Shihab al-Din, Interview by Farhat, Part 1; ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir, Interview, *al-Kuwait*, 7, 22.
[262] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940; Salih al-ᶜUjairi, "Hikayat Akhawat ᶜUda wa-l-Sarir Abu Nafarain," *al-Qabas*, October 15, 2005.

began to show themselves in Kuwait, fanned by Iraqi propaganda.[263]

He went on to argue that Britain should "make education in Kuwait itself as useful as possible and to try and inculcate the boys with pro-British ideas against Iraqi influence," and also provide alternatives to higher education in Iraq.[264] To this end, the British Council appointed an educational specialist, C.R.L. Adrian-Vallance, as Educational Adviser to the governments of Kuwait and Bahrain in late 1939. Although he was initially to be based in Kuwait, Adrian-Vallance was instead stationed in Bahrain and visited Kuwait periodically.[265] This was probably because Kuwait's ruler, who had resisted the appointment of British advisers in the past,[266] "was not too enthusiastic" about the idea.[267]

The British had mixed success in influencing education in Kuwait. Their most notable achievement during this period was stopping the ruler from accepting ten scholarships from the Iraqi government in 1940. Instead, they encouraged Shaykh Ahmad to send students to Bahrain,[268] where Adrian-Vallance established a technical school. Four students were sent there at the Kuwaiti government's expense in 1940, and the Kuwait Oil Company sponsored a further five the following year.[269] Other British attempts at intervention will be discussed below.

Despite numerous challenges and setbacks, the Palestinian teachers brought about several profound transformations in the state of Kuwaiti education during their six-year tenure. Firstly, their implementation of the Iraqi curriculum marked a watershed in the

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[263] IOR/R/15/5/195: PR to Peel, 21/3/1939.
[264] Ibid.
[265] IOR/R/15/5/196: Dundas to Prior, 15/11/1939; IOR/R/15/5/195: PR to Galloway, 17/11/1939; PA to Adrian-Vallance, 22/9/1939; Tollinton to Fowle, 1/8/1939.
[266] IOR/R/15/5/205: deGaury to Fowle, 13/6/1938; Fowle to Gibson, 12/5/1938.
[267] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Prior, 2/10/1939.
[268] IOR/R/15/5/196: Ruler to Galloway, 3/8/1940; PA to Ruler, 31/7/1940; PA to Prior, 15/7/1940; Embassy Baghdad to PA, 12/6/1940.
[269] IOR/R/15/5/196: Gov. Technical School Bahrein to Dir. Of Ed. Kuwait, 23/6/1942; PA to Prior, 10/1/1941; PA to Prior, 28/10/1940; PA to Weightman, 20/7/1940; *Tarikh al-Taʿlim fi Dawlat al-Kuwait,* Vol. 2 (Kuwait: CRSK, 2002), 54; S. al-Shihab, Vol. 1, 356.

modernization of education, and entailed the introduction of many new subjects including civics, the natural sciences, geometry, art, and physical education.[270] The practices and trappings associated with education during this period also became more modernized and westernized. Students were made to sit at desks as opposed to mats on the floor,[271] and wore Western dress for physical education and Scouting despite initial social resistance to this attire.[272] Shihab al-Din even sought to encourage students to wear Western dress as their school uniform by providing free clothes at government expense. This policy failed, however, due to opposition from Kuwaiti society and the British Educational Adviser.[273]

Palestinian control of education also marked the beginning of the secularization of education in Kuwait, which had hitherto been the preserve of the ʿulamaʾ. As a mark of this transition, the Palestinian teachers instructed their pupils to address them as "effendi" instead of "mulla."[274] Furthermore, the Palestinian teachers raised the overall standard of education in Kuwait. Already by 1938, the British Political Agent reported that "preliminary education of a limited number of boys [has] been much improved by the Palestinian masters."[275] The following year, the British Educational Adviser credited Shihab al-Din with improving education in Kuwait. He described the teachers as "competent," even while criticizing the overall standard of education.[276] Shihab al-Din also functioned as inspector, overseeing the schools operated by local teachers.[277] This entailed a degree of training for the Kuwaiti staff, most of which was educated at the Mubarakiyya

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[270] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940; Dundas to Prior, 15/11/1939.
[271] Jabir Hadid, "Mulhaq Khas," Interview, *al-Hadaf,* April 18, 1962.
[272] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 151-153.
[273] Al-Rujaib, 97; IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Fowle, 10/7/1939; Vallance, Report A, 28/6/1939.
[274] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 146-147.
[275] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Fowle, 11/10/1938.
[276] IOR/R/15/5/195: Vallance, Report B, 29/6/1939; Vallance, Report A, 28/6/1939.
[277] Shihab al-Din, Interview by Farhat, Part 1; IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940; IOR/R/15/5/195: Vallance, Report A, 28/6/1939.

and Ahmadiyya schools.[278]

Finally, the Palestinian teachers also presided over the expansion of the educational system, which was driven by the Legislative Council's decisions to abolish tuition fees and increase the number of schools.[279] By the time the Palestinians left in the fall of 1942, the combined total of students in Kuwait's four male schools was 1,080, with 415 in the more advanced Mubarakiyya School.[280] By 1939, Kuwait's first secondary-level classes had been added to this school.[281] The number of female schools, moreover, expanded from one in 1938 to three in 1942, with the number of schoolgirls increasing from one hundred to 332.[282]

Several innovations introduced by the Palestinian teachers contributed to an increasing identification with Arab nationalism, namely: the Iraqi curriculum, Scouting and physical education, and extracurricular activities. As discussed previously, the Iraqi curriculum was designed to foster national awareness through the "national subjects" of history, Arabic, geography, civics, and physical education. As in Iraq, Kuwaiti students studied these subjects starting from the lower classes. The textbooks came from Iraq, and were criticized by Adrian-Vallance for focusing only on the Arab world. Geography books, he complained, "discuss merely the topography of the Middle East, with the emphasis on large towns like Damascus and Baghdad."[283] Regarding history, he remarked that while students were taught "nothing whatever about their own long history, or about our 150 years' protection of their shores and their liberties, they know… all about the struggles for

[278] Shihab al-Din, Interview by Farhat, Part 1; IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940.
[279] Al-Nuri, *al-Taʿlim,* 76-77; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 204.
[280] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin to PA, 17/11/1942.
[281] IOR/R/15/5/196: Dundas to Prior, 15/11/1939.
[282] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin to PA, 17/11/1942; Mariam ʿAbd al-Malik al-Salih, *Safahat min al-Tatawwur al-Tarikhi li-Taʿlim al-Fatat fi al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: 1975).
[283] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940.

freedom of the various oppressed and ill-used Arab States."[284]

Salih al-Shihab, who attended the Mubarakiyya between 1937 and 1940,[285] identifies two of the history textbooks used during this period, both of which were authored by prominent Palestinian Arab nationalist intellectuals. *Tarikh al-ᶜArab wa-l-Islam* (The History of the Arabs and Islam) by Muhammad ᶜIzzat Darwaza was used during the sixth primary year, while Darwish al-Miqdadi's *Tarikh al-Umma al-ᶜArabiyya* (The History of the Arab Nation) was taught during the first year of the secondary level.[286] Ernest Dawn considers the latter work to be among the most "comprehensive" early articulations of "the Arab nationalist self-view."[287] The components of this self-view, which underline al-Miqdadi's narrative of Arab history from antiquity to the time of publication, are anti-imperialism, socialism, and what Dawn describes as "the Semito-Arab version of history."[288] The latter conceived of the Arabs as the heirs to the Semitic civilization, which has been locked in an age-old struggle with the Aryans, i.e. the Persians and Europeans. The former, driven by nationalist fervor, undermined the Arab-Islamic empire from within, while the latter have sought to subjugate the Arabs since the Crusades.[289] Zionism is portrayed as the latest manifestation of Western imperial aggression.[290]

The didactic purpose of al-Miqdadi's textbook is made clear in its introduction, which begins thus: "the goal of teaching national history in our schools is spreading the

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[284] IOR/R/15/5/195: PR to Weightman, 15/8/1939.
[285] Al-Khrafi, 851; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, back cover.
[286] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 60, 310-312. Al-Shihab refers to Darwaza's textbook as "*Tarikh al-ᶜArab.*" The work's full title is given by Matthews, who states that it was the first textbook written by Darwaza in 1924. The Iraqi Ministry of Education adopted it for the primary level in 1934. It covers "the period of the ancient empires through the Ayyubid period… [and does] not directly link these events to contemporary national movements." Matthews, *Confronting an Empire,* 54.
[287] Dawn, "Formation," 68-69.
[288] Ibid., 73, 79.
[289] C. Ernest Dawn, "An Arab Nationalist View of World Politics and History in the Interwar Period: Darwish al-Miqdadi," in *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1919-1939,* ed. Uriel Dann (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1988), 356-359, 366, 369; Dawn, "Formation," 71.
[290] Darwish al-Miqdadi, *Tarikh al-Umma al-ᶜArabiyya* (Baghdad: Matbaᶜat al-Maᶜarif, 1353 AH), 328, 516.

nationalist idea, so that students are brought up believing they have an existence (*kayān*), a history, and a nation, and so that they respect their nation and traditions."[291] Furthermore, as Youssef Choueiri highlights, the text encourages pupils "to embrace the virtues of modern citizenship, national unity and service to the fatherland."[292] It also advances a "general modernist view," particularly with regards to the status of women.[293] True to the British adviser's characterization, al-Miqdadi's textbook does not cover the history of the Gulf. However, he does provide a very brief account of the history of Kuwait, stating that it was an Ottoman dependency until the British intervened. He adds: "Kuwait today is an emirate subject to British influence. It has an amir and an [independent] existence even though it is a small spot, and it would be better if it belonged to Najd or Iraq."[294]

The character of history instruction in Kuwait's schools is among the factors that led Adrian-Vallance to report to the ruler on the "necessity of cultivating in the school-children… a patriotic feeling for Kuwait, rather than for the Arab world as a whole."[295] The British authorities even tried to convince Shaykh Ahmad to commission Adrian-Vallance to write a textbook on Kuwaiti history, but the ruler did not wish to pay the demanded £100.[296] The adviser also objected to the schools' distribution of "exercise books which bore on their covers the portrait of a foreign Ruler and the name of a foreign State," i.e. Iraq and its king.[297] This led the Educational Department to provide notebooks with Shaykh Ahmad's picture, but in 1940 the adviser reported that some pupils still used "privately-purchased books displaying…the portraits of Riza Khan or the boy-king of 'Iraq."[298]

A second means by which the Palestinian teachers disseminated Arab nationalist

[291] Ibid., 6.
[292] Choueiri, 38.
[293] Ibid., 36-37.
[294] Al-Miqdadi, 488-489, 492.
[295] IOR/R/15/5/195: Vallance, Report A, 28/6/1939.
[296] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Prior, 15/9/1939; Prior to Weightman, 15/8/1939; PA to Fowl, 10/7/1939.
[297] IOR/R/15/5/195: Vallance, Report A, 28/6/1939.
[298] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940.

ideology was through Scouting and physical education. Muhammad al-Maghribi, one of the first Palestinian teachers to arrive, had been an accomplished Scout while a student at the SMC's Rawdat al-Maᶜarif.[299] Described by Adrian-Vallance as a man of "efficiency and enthusiasm,"[300] al-Maghribi established Kuwait's first Boy Scout troop at the Mubarakiyya School in late 1936. More than one hundred boys enrolled over the course of the following year.[301] He also introduced physical education.[302] As in Iraq, athletic teams and Scouting troops were named after historical Arab heroes.[303] Al-Maghribi also appears to have imbued Scouting with a militaristic quality. He led his Scouts on marches around the town and they served as a "guard of honor" during festivals and public ceremonies.[304]

The political nature of Scouting activity in Kuwait is highlighted by an incident in 1941 that aroused British concern. A troop of Kuwaiti Scouts visited Bahrain with their Palestinian and Kuwaiti teachers. At several functions, the troop insisted on singing about "Palestine, [and] the killing and ill-treatment of Arabs there." In their view, the Kuwaiti Scouts were "making an attempt to imbue Bahrain schoolboys with undesirable Arab 'Jugend' ideas."[305] Al-Shihab, who was one of the Kuwaiti Scouts present, adds that the troop's orator vigorously attacked British colonialism and Zionism in several speeches. He also responds to the British account by pointing out that the Scouts' Bahraini hosts were no less enthusiastic in their support for Palestine and Arab nationalism.[306]

Extracurricular activities introduced by the Palestinians also served to cultivate a

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[299] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 150-151; al-Khrafi, 711.
[300] IOR/R/15/5/195: Vallance, Report A, 28/6/1939.
[301] IOR/R/15/1/717: Administration Report 1937, 36; IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 16-31 December 1936.
[302] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 16-31 December 1936; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 150-159; al-Khrafi, 711.
[303] Jabir Hadid, Interview, *al-Hadaf.*
[304] IOR/L/P&S/12/3757: Intelligence Summary, 16-31 December 1936; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 153, 159, 200; al-Zwayyir, 159-160.
[305] IOR/R/15/5/196: PA Bahrain to PA Kuwait, 1/4/1941; Bahrain Intelligence Summary No.5 of 1941.
[306] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 468-472, 480, 490.

sense of Arab nationalism among students. An early example of such an activity occurred during the aforementioned visit by a Palestinian delegation to the Mubarakiyya School in late 1936. Muhammad ᶜIzzat Darwaza recalls that he and his companions listened to the students recite poetry about Palestine and Arab nationalism under the supervision of their Palestinian teachers.[307] While this was an exceptional event, the singing of Arab nationalist anthems during the morning lineup was a regular feature of school life. The anthems included "Ya Ayuha al-ᶜArabi Qum (Oh Arab Awake)", "Bilad al-ᶜUrb Awtani (The Lands of the Arabs are my Homeland)," and "Mawtini (My Homeland)."[308] Adrian-Vallance also objected to the use of the Syrian national anthem in Kuwaiti schools, prompting the teachers to substitute the word "Kuwait" for "Syria."[309]

Najm and al-Salih, who were both Arabic teachers educated at Egypt's Dar al-ᶜUlum, expanded extracurricular cultural activity following their arrival in 1938. They staged one of Kuwait's earliest plays in the summer of 1939, the first of many that portrayed classical Arab and Islamic history. They also held public celebrations during religious holidays in which students recited speeches and poetry.[310] This activity occasionally became overtly political, as when the Palestinian teachers organized a ceremony at the Mubarakiyya School to mourn the death of Iraq's King Ghazi in 1939. This incident angered Shaykh Ahmad, who withdrew his two sons from the school.[311]

Such extracurricular activities also allowed for close social interaction between the Palestinian teachers and their students, a factor that was as important as the formal curriculum in the spread of Arab nationalist ideas. This is evident in the case of Ahmad al-

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[307] Darwaza, 351-352.
[308] Shihab al-Din, Interview, *al-Hadaf*; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 147-150.
[309] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940; IOR/R/15/5/195: Vallance, Report A, 28/6/1939.
[310] IOR/R/15/5/206: PA to Fowle, 1/7/1939; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 200-202, 211-224; al-Khrafi, 682-683, 703-704.
[311] Al-Khatib, 42.

Khatib, who would cofound the MAN and lead Kuwait's Arab nationalist opposition in the 1950s. Al-Khatib credits his first stirrings of Arab national sentiment in the late 1930s to the influence of his Palestinian teachers. He and his classmates were particularly attached to Faisal al-Tahir, nephew of Muhammad ʿAli al-Tahir, who ran a summer camp and took the students on field trips. "Through him," recalls al-Khatib, "we lived the tragedy of the Palestinians." A chemistry teacher, Faisal al-Tahir taught his pupils how to make gunpowder and educated them about the Arab Revolt in Palestine.[312] Al-Tahir would later die in a bomb making accident during the 1948 War.[313]

Al-Shihab similarly recalls that the students of the Mubarakiyya learned much about the revolt in Palestine from their Palestinian teachers. He states:

> Those teachers were our only source of information [on these events], as only a few people had radio sets. They inflamed our fervor and hostility towards the colonial powers' conspiracy, which aimed to create a Zionist entity that would be a thorn in the side of the greater Arab homeland.[314]

The Palestinian teachers' social ties were not restricted to the students, and encompassed the Kuwaiti teachers and the wider public as well. Every Thursday, the Mubarakiyya School hosted a cultural salon attended by the Palestinian and Kuwaiti teachers as well as prominent local poets such as Fahad al-ʿAskar and Saqr al-Shabib. The Palestinian teachers also regularly attended the various *dīwānīyyāt* of Kuwait town, and were thus able to influence wider society.[315]

Within the space of around six years, the Palestinian teachers erected the basic structure of modern state education in Kuwait on solidly Arab nationalist foundations. Their legacy is among the main factors that ensured that Arab nationalist influence persisted within the Educational Department despite ongoing British efforts to eradicate it.

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[312] Ibid.
[313] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 182, 229.
[314] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 172.
[315] Ibid., 159; Shihab al-Din, Interview by Farhat, Part 1.

After 1948, many of these teachers would return to work in Kuwait, indicating that their dispute with the department and subsequent departure did not sever their ties to the country.

Kuwaiti Students Abroad, 1938-1942

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the rise in the number of Kuwaitis studying in Arab countries produced significant social and political repercussions in the shaykhdom. Gradually, the circle of those able to to study abroad was expanding, particularly as the Legislative Council sowed the seeds of what would become a government scholarship program. In Basra, Baghdad, and Cairo, the students underwent "pilgrimages" that reinforced their identification with a wider Arab homeland. Like the Islamic modernist ʿulamaʾ and cosmopolitan merchants before them, they became incorporated into transnational networks that later influenced their political and professional activities in Kuwait.

The Kuwaiti students' "pilgrimages" also led them to identify with the *effendiyya* stratum in their host countries, adopting the habits and worldview of this social group. As pupils enrolled at modern institutions, clad in Western suits and the Iraqi *sidāra* or Egyptian fez, the young Kuwaitis would have been indistinguishable from their peers. In the context of Iraq and Egypt, they were *effendiyya*. Upon returning home, these young men retained many aspects of this distinctive identity. They were significant enough to have a political impact within the shaykhdom, as evinced by the their role in the 1938 Majlis Movement. However, the as yet rudimentary nature of educational and bureaucratic institutions in Kuwait meant that they remained a tiny minority, and cannot be said to have formed a social stratum. These educated young men will therefore be described as "proto-*effendiyya.*"

In late 1938, when five Kuwaiti scholarship students were about to depart for

Baghdad's Dar al-Muᶜalimin al-Rifiyya (Rural Teachers' College), the British Political Agent anticipated the effects Iraqi education would have on the youths. "I deplore the idea that any more Kuwait boys should go to Bagdad," he protested, "There is inculcated, not a healthy patriotism, but what I can only call a 'half-baked', anti-British, and virulent, nationalism."[316] He went on to warn of the city's subversive press, "occasional coup d'etat," and its rowdy and politicized students.[317] This characterization was not inaccurate. Iraqi students were often encouraged to engage in anti-British protests and other activity in support of Pan-Arab causes. Their participation in various paramilitary youth groups has already been discussed.[318]

The Political Agent probably based his evaluation of Iraqi education on the growing numbers of Kuwaitis educated in Baghdad and Basra. By the late 1930s, they had become a conspicuous presence. During his visit to Kuwait in 1939, the Australian travel writer Alan Villiers took note of this group, which he termed "the intelligentsia." An admirer of Kuwait's traditional virtues, he scoffed at these "youths coming back in silk trousers from Iraq," who complained of the "backwardness" of their shaykhdom "and spoke of the democracy of Iraq as an ideal to strive for."[319]

Villiers arrived in Kuwait after the Legislative Council had been dissolved, and thus did not witness the prominent political role played by the proto-*effendiyya* in the Majlis Movement. This was most apparent in the Patriotic Youths' Bloc, which constituted the ideological apparatus of the Legislative Council, and bore arms to defend it during the standoff with the ruler. Graduates of Iraqi schools occupied prominent positions within the Majlis Movement. Khalid Sulaiman al-ᶜAdsani, a recipient of Kuwait's first scholarship to

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[316] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Fowle, 11/10/1938.
[317] IOR/R/15/5/195: PA to Fowle, 16/1/1939.
[318] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 99-101.
[319] Villiers, 354.

Iraq in 1925, served as secretary of the Legislative Council and one of the Majlis Movement's most committed Arab nationalist activists. The Iraqi-educated teacher Khalid al-Nasr Allah was appointed to the Legislative Council's Youth Committee, established to instruct and guide Kuwaiti youth.[320] Both men were also members of the Patriotic Youths' Bloc.[321]

Even Kuwaiti students still studying in Iraq were able to participate actively in the Majlis Movement and become key figures within the Patriotic Youths' Bloc. A prominent example is Jasim Hamad al-Saqr. The younger brother of the opposition leader ᶜAbd Allah, he moved to Basra in 1931 due to his family's interests in date farming. He completed his primary, intermediate, and secondary education in the city. In 1939 he enrolled in Baghdad's College of Law, from which he would graduate in 1943, becoming one of the first Kuwaitis to obtain a university degree.[322] At the time of the Majlis Movement, Jasim was a seasoned member of Iraq's paramilitary Futuwwa. Drawing on this experience, he volunteered to train Kuwait's first modern police force, created by the Legislative Council.[323] He also sat on the administrative committee of the Patriotic Youths' Bloc.[324] A British report described him thus: "Very fanatic and always carries an automatic pistol."[325]

Another illustrative example is Ahmad al-Sayyid ᶜUmar, the son of the Turkish cleric ᶜUmar ᶜAsim al-Izmiri who taught at the Mubarakiyya School. Ahmad was raised and educated in Kuwait, and moved to Basra to complete secondary school in 1934. It was there that he recalls becoming politically aware, reading various political literature. During a visit home in 1938, he joined the Patriotic Youths' Bloc. At its inaugural party, he recited

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[320] Al-Khrafi, 676.
[321] IOR/R/15/5/206: List of the Names of Kuwaiti Youth who are Anti-Shaikh and Anti-British, 13/7/1939.
[322] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 67-69, 246.
[323] Al-Rujaib 71; al-Hatim 170-171.
[324] Al-Hatim 198.
[325] IOR/R/15/5/206: List, 13/7/1939.

a poem he had composed celebrating the departure of the ruler's secretary Mulla Salih from Kuwait. The poem became well known, and almost led to his arrest after the Legislative Council's dissolution.[326] His poetry, which he published in various Iraqi newspapers, earned him the epithet "Poet of the Youth."[327]Ahmad also participated in the popular protests in support of the Rashid ᶜAli government in 1941. After its overthrow, the British imprisoned him in Basra for six months, where he claims he was tortured.[328]

In the case of the scholarship students sent to Iraq in 1938, it turned out that the Political Agent's fears regarding their politicization were not misplaced. One of the pupils, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Dusari, recalls how their Arab nationalist zeal drove them to undergo military training and participate in patriotic events such as the funeral of King Ghazi in 1939. He and his fellow scholarship recipients, Khalid al-Musallam, Salih ᶜAbd al-Malik al-Salih, ᶜAbd Allah al-Mutawwaᶜ, and Badr al-Sayyid Rajab al-Rifaᶜi, later volunteered in the Civil Defense forces that supported the Rashid ᶜAli regime against the British. For around a month, they worked all day long in the arsenals, where they loaded arms and ammunition onto military trucks.[329]

The four scholarship students sent to the secular branch of Cairo's al-Azhar University in 1939 had similar experiences to their Baghdad-based compatriots. The youths arrived at a time when Egypt was building cultural and political bridges with the Arab countries, and Arab nationalist ideas were gaining ground, particularly in intellectual and educational circles.[330] The four Kuwaiti pupils, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, Ahmad al-ᶜAdwani, Yusuf Mishari al-Badr, and Yusuf al-ᶜUmar, were thoroughly exposed to Egyptian political

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[326] Al-Sayyid ᶜUmar, 39-46.
[327] Hashim, 160.
[328] Al-Sayyid ᶜUmar, 43.
[329] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Dusari, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, *Rijal fi Tarikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. 3, 251-253; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 239.
[330] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 20-29.

and cultural life. In an interview, Husain recalls how this "pilgrimage" experience led him and his classmates to develop a close association with the Egyptians.

> Wartime Egypt boasted a dynamic ideological environment…. We were truly dazzled by the lectures of Taha Husain and the writers of *al-Risala* magazine, and by Ahmad Amin and his comrades on the Committee of Authorship, Translation, and Publishing. We followed partisan politics, identifying with this party or that, unperturbed by the fact that the officials regarded us as "foreign" students. Our classmates and the general public, who treated us kindly and courteously, encouraged our attitude. These people did not have a clear conception of the idea of Arab nationalism, but their spontaneous emotions exceeded [ideological] formalities and formulas. For this reason, I (and perhaps most Arabs studying in Egypt) did not feel isolated from the issues of Egyptian society. Throughout the seven years of the war we experienced the same problems, and were moved by the very same events.[331]

The Kuwaiti students became active participants in intellectual and political activity. At least two, Husain and al-Badr, already had a political background, having been members of the Patriotic Youth's Bloc before leaving for Egypt.[332]

Al-Badr, the son of a Legislative Council member, frequented the salon of the Palestinian editor Muhammad ᶜAli al-Tahir, which was a meeting place for anti-imperialist activists from across the region.[333] This appears to have influenced him, for in 1941 he was arrested for "the circulation of anti-British propaganda" in Cairo. The British authorities imprisoned him in Palestine for around a year, and then deported him to Kuwait.[334] Al-ᶜAdwani, in addition, recalls participating regularly in various protests, including some in support of the Palestinian cause and others directed against the British and Egyptian governments.[335]

Over the course of the 1940s, all the aforementioned Kuwaiti scholarship students would return to work for the Educational Department, playing a central role in reinforcing

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[331] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, Interview, *al-Hawadith*, April 1, 1994, qtd. in "ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, Sirat Watan wa-Umma fi Sirat Rajul," *al-Khalij,* June 12, 1996).
[332] IOR/R/15/5/206: List, 13/7/1939.
[333] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 183.
[334] IOR/R/15/5/197: PA to Wakelin, 25/11/1943.
[335] Al-Rujaib 306.

its Arab nationalist character. They would also swell the ranks of the proto-*effendiyya*, which continued to expand as oil wealth allowed for the development of an ambitious scholarship program. As education and the state bureaucracy developed, a fully-fledged *effendiyya* stratum would gradually take shape in Kuwait in around the early 1950s, a subject that will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Chapter Three: British Intervention, Egyptian Control, and Arab Nationalist Resistance, 1942-1950

The arrival of the Palestinian teachers in 1936 inaugurated what would be sixteen years of increasing Arab control over education in Kuwait. After their departure in 1942, teachers from different Arab countries succeeded each other at the helm of Kuwait's Educational Department in a process that one Kuwaiti student would later compare to the military coups of 1950s Syria.[1] In the academic year 1942-1943, Syrian teachers and an official Egyptian Educational Mission served under a Bahraini Director of Education. The following year saw the Egyptian mission assert control over education, which it would maintain until the 1949-1950 school year. This "coup" was facilitated by the British, who sought to co-opt members of the mission in order to assert greater control over education and replace the Arab nationalist Iraqi curriculum with that of Egypt.

The British scheme, however, was resisted and largely foiled by an Arab nationalist current that emerged among the Kuwaiti teachers, supported by certain influential members of the Educational Council. During the 1940s, the Educational Department in fact became the primary base for Arab nationalist activism in Kuwait and the growing number of "proto-*effendiyya*." In 1948, Palestinian teachers also began returning to Kuwait, strengthening the Arab nationalist current and eventually clashing with the department's Egyptian administration. The 1940s was thus characterized by both increased Arab control over education and greater contestation over its Arab nationalist character. However, the most significant impact of Egyptian control over Kuwaiti education was that it allowed for a dramatic increase in the number of scholarships to Cairo, a development that had far-reaching socio-political implications for Kuwait. This period concluded with a third "coup" in 1950, which ended the period of Egyptian ascendancy.

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[1] Hamid ʿAbd al-Salam, "Araʾ al-Nas," *al-Biʿtha*, September 1951, 260.

A Transitional Period, 1942-1943

The establishment of state education in Kuwait under the aegis of the Educational Council occurred against the backdrop of mounting Arab nationalist activism. The early 1940s, by contrast, presented a markedly different environment. Following the dissolution of the Legislative Council in 1939, Kuwait's Arab nationalists pinned their hopes on the Rashid ᶜAli Revolt, with those present in Iraq actively supporting it. The British invasion of Iraq in 1941 destroyed a vital base of support for Kuwait's nationalist movement. With the movement's leaders imprisoned or in exile, its future appeared bleak.[2] The scope for political and cultural activity in Kuwait became severely restricted, and would remain so throughout the decade.[3]

Remarkably, Arab nationalist influence within the Educational Department persisted despite this inhospitable climate. This can be attributed to several actors, namely: the Educational Council, Arab expatriate teachers, and a rising Arab nationalist current among the Kuwaiti teachers. At the same time, the British stepped up their efforts to undermine the nationalist character of education. The year 1942-1943 represents a transitional period during which the first "coup" in the Educational Department took place. Command passed from the Palestinian teachers to a joint administration composed of a Bahraini Director of Education and a Syro-Egyptian faculty. The new regime was staunchly nationalist, and therefore met fierce British resistance.

The first actor within Kuwait's educational administration that favored the continuation of Arab nationalist influence was the Educational Council. As has been stated, the fate of this body under the Legislative Council is uncertain, but it appears

[2] IOR/R/15/1/719: Administration Report 1941, 2; IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 16-30 April 1944; Intelligence Summary, 16-31 May 1941; Intelligence Summary, 16-31 March 1939; al-Badr Vol .1, 155-172.
[3] Hashim, 250.

again in the documentary record in October 1940.[4] It is unclear whether it had survived throughout this period or if the ruler resurrected it. Although Shaykh Ahmad al-Jabir greatly strengthened his position after quashing the Majlis Movement, he felt the need to normalize relations with the merchants and co-opt them within his administration. In 1944, he freed the imprisoned leaders of the Majlis Movement and declared an amnesty for the vast majority of exiles.[5] As part of this reconciliation process, leading merchants served on a variety of government institutions. Alongside the appointed Shura Council that replaced the dissolved Legislative Council, the ruler perpetuated and even expanded the administrative council system of the 1930s. However, councilmen were no longer elected but appointed by the ruler. In addition to the Municipal and Educational Councils, the ruler formed the Health Council in 1943,[6] the Awqaf Council in 1949,[7] and a variety of temporary, ad hoc councils throughout the 1940s.[8]

The ruler's conciliatory attitude ensured a great deal of continuity in membership between the Educational Council of the 1930s and that of the 1940s, ensuring that nationalist merchants retained a great deal of influence over education in Kuwait. A 1942 document, which provides the first mention of the body's members in the 1940s, reveals that half of them had been on the last council in 1937. These were: the former Director of Education Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi, Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf, ʿAbd al-Muhsin al-Khrafi, and Ahmad al-Mishari.[9] Of these men, al-Nisf had particularly strong Arab nationalist tendencies despite his loyalist position during the Majlis Movement. As has been stated, he is reported to have been a Red Book Group member and to have aided in smuggling weapons to Palestine. Al-Qinaʿi and al-Khrafi had also participated actively in the pro-Palestine activism of the 1930s.

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[4] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940.
[5] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 16-30 April 1944.
[6] Al-Rumi, 96-97.
[7] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha*, February 1949, 59.
[8] IOR/L/P&S/12/3759A: Intelligence Summary, 16-30 September 1947; Intelligence Summary, 1-15 March 1947; Intelligence Summary, August and September 1946.
[9] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin's Report, November 1942.

Surprisingly, the reformist opposition was also represented on the council by the former political prisoner and devoted Arab nationalist ᶜAbd al-Hamid al-Saniᶜ. Nothing is known of the remaining two councilmen.[10] The nationalist character of the Educational Council seemed to be at least partially apparent to the British Political Agent, who described its members as "for the most part mildly anti-foreign in their sympathies and not particularly pro-Shaikh." He reserved special criticism for al-Qinaᶜi, calling him "a double dealing bigoted old scoundrel with distinctly anti-British views."[11]

In 1942, there was a dramatic change in the Educational Department's staff, the reasons for which were described by the Political Agent as "somewhat obscure."[12] At the end of the academic year 1941-1942, the Educational Council reduced the Palestinian teachers' salaries, prompting all but one to resign.[13] F.J. Wakelin, who succeeded Adrian-Vallance as British Educational Adviser in October 1941,[14] portrays this decision as purely financial. The council learned of the Egyptian government's willingness to second teachers to Arab countries and subsidize their salaries, and thus wished to dispense with the Palestinians.[15] It has already been stated that the Educational Department was going through financial troubles at the time.

According to al-Shihab, there were also rumors that the council's action arose from British pressure on the ruler to "change the educational policy and the character of the curriculum."[16] The British were clearly unhappy with the Iraqi curriculum, and Adrian-Vallance saw the appointment of a "foreign Director" as the only way to change

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[10] Ibid. These were ᶜAbd Allah al-Zaid and Yusuf al-ᶜAbd al-Razzaq.
[11] IOR/R/15/5/196: Hickinbotham to PR, 18/11/1942.
[12] IOR/R/15/1/719: Administration Report 1942, 6.
[13] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin's Report, November 1942. The exception was ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Salih, who stayed on for one more year. Al-Shihab says he elected to stay because he had studied alongside the new Director of Education, ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Shamlan, at Dar al-ᶜUlum. S. al-Shihab Vol. 2, 61.
[14] IOR/R/15/5/196: Secretary of State to PR, 22/4/1942; PR to PA, 23/3/1942.
[15] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin's Report, November 1942; S. al-Shihab Vol. 2, 59-61. The Political Agent holds that the Palestinian teachers were let go after asking for increased salaries. IOR/R/15/1/719: Administration Report 1942, 6.
[16] S. al-Shihab Vol. 2, 60.

it.[17] However, there is no evidence of a British role in the Palestinians' departure. Finally, it is also possible that the aforementioned administrative instability and decline in academic standards contributed to the council's desire for new staff.

In place of al-Qinaᶜi, the Educational Council appointed the Bahraini ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Shamlan as Director of Education. Al-Shamlan had just graduated from Cairo's Dar al-ᶜUlum when he befriended the newly arrived Kuwaiti scholarship students in 1939. One of the students, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, wrote to the Kuwaiti authorities and recommended that they employ al-Shamlan as a teacher. They agreed, and al-Shamlan taught for around a year at the Mubarakiyya School before becoming director.[18]

Al-Shamlan had a strong Arab nationalist and anti-British background. As a child, he lived for a number of years in Bombay, where the British had exiled his father Saᶜad on charges of sedition. ᶜAbd al-Latif's brother ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz would become a principal leader of the Bahraini opposition in the 1950s, leading the British to imprison him on St Helena.[19] ᶜAbd al-Latif previously taught alongside Arab nationalist teachers like the Syrian ᶜUthman al-Hurani at Bahrain's al-Hidaya al-Khalifiyya School in the 1920s. He was compelled to quit after the British-backed educational authorities took over this school. He then founded his own private school, which he eventually closed due to British pressure, moving to Egypt to continue his education in 1931.[20] As shall be seen, his trouble with the British would continue in Kuwait.

The Educational Council tasked ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Shamlan with securing educational assistance from Cairo, which was then cementing its status as the cultural and educational hub of the Arab world. The Arab nationalist trend that emerged in Egypt in the 1930s developed further in the 1940s. Arab nationalism penetrated the political establishment, increasingly influencing both the palace-backed factions and the

[17] IOR/R/15/5/196: Vallance to Galloway, 1/10/1940.
[18] ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Shamlan, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 263; ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "Min Kuttab al-Muttawaᶜ ila al-Jamiᶜa," Interview by Junaidi Khalaf Allah, *al-Kuwait,* October 1980, 51.
[19] Khalid al-Bassam, *Shakhsiyyat Bahrainiyya* (Beirut: Jadawel, 2011), 49-60.
[20] S. al-Shihab Vol. 2, 51, 54.

opposition Wafd Party from the late 1930s.[21] At the same time, the Egyptian intellectuals who had been at the forefront of cultural exchange with the Arab countries called upon their country to lead efforts to forge Arab unity in education.[22] These calls became particularly pertinent in the early 1940s, when the British occupation of Iraq ended that state's role as the primary patron of Pan-Arab educational cooperation.[23]

Late in 1941, the Egyptian government announced its intention to launch a "programme aiming at strengthening the cultural ties between the Arab countries."[24] This project expanded under the subsequent Wafdist government, which was anxious to prove its Arab nationalist credentials after having been imposed by the British. In 1943, the Prime Minister Mustafa al-Nahhas embarked upon the pan-Arab talks that would lead to the formation of the Arab League.[25] Cultural coordination was thus subsumed within a wider scheme of Arab unification. As part of its bid for pan-Arab leadership, the Egyptian government sought "to demonstrate its cultural ascendancy" by disseminating educational assistance to various Arab states.[26] It was out of this context that Egyptian educational assistance to Kuwait emerged.

In approaching Egypt's educational authorities, ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Shamlan relied on the connections he had established while studying there. He sought the intercession of the "prominent pan-Arabist"[27] and intellectual ᶜAbd al-Wahhab ᶜAzzam. Together, they approached Taha Husain, then a technical adviser to the Wafdist government, and Prime Minister al-Nahhas. Al-Shamlan recalls that both men were extremely welcoming. They quickly agreed to depute four teachers to Kuwait and subsidize half their salaries, and to provide scholarships to ten or eleven Kuwaiti students to complete

[21] Porath, 155-159.
[22] Ibid., 176-177.
[23] Simon, "The Imposition," 99.
[24] Porath, 178.
[25] Ibid., 196, 258.
[26] Ibid., 179.
[27] Ibid., 189.

their secondary education in Egypt.[28] According to al-Shihab, al-Shamlan was allowed to handpick the teachers. He chose his former classmate at Dar al-ᶜUlum ᶜAli Haikal, and relied on him to select the rest.[29] These teachers comprised an official Egyptian Educational Mission (*biᶜtha taᶜlīmīyya*) to Kuwait.[30]

On the same trip, al-Shamlan visited Damascus, where he attempted to arrive at a similar arrangement with the Syrian authorities. The Syrian teacher Faisal al-ᶜAzma recalls this visit in his memoire. He was then a fresh law graduate, and was disappointed to hear that the Syrian Ministry of Education had refused al-Shamlan's request. A committed Arab nationalist, he took it upon himself to organize a group of Syrians, numbering three apart from himself, who agreed to teach in Kuwait at the low salaries that the Educational Department was able to offer.[31] The de facto head of the group was the professional teacher Kamil Binqisli,[32] who appears to have had activist tendencies. He had participated in a nationalist-inspired aid scheme for Syrian villages that the Red Book Group had supported.[33]

Although the Egyptian Educational Mission would dominate education in Kuwait in the long run, the Syrian teachers initially had the upper hand, imbuing the educational system with a strong Arab nationalist character. Binqisli replaced the Palestinian Shihab al-Din as Director of Studies, also becoming headmaster of the Mubarakiyya School. The department retained the nationalist Iraqi curriculum, though some textbooks from Syria and Egypt were also used.[34]

Al-ᶜAzma, who became headmaster of the Sharqiyya School, appears to have

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[28] Al-Shamlan, Interview by Milaiji, 263-264; IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin's Report, November 1942. Earlier British reports mention ten scholarships (IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin to PA, 27/3/1943; Wakelin's Report, November 1942), but later reports mention eleven (IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Hilali Pasha, 22/11/1943; IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin to Highwood, 3/12/1943). It is not clear if the early reports were incorrect or if the eleventh student was added subsequently.
[29] S. al-Shihab Vol. 2, 62.
[30] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin's Report, November 1942.
[31] Al-ᶜAzma, 7-12; S. al-Shihab Vol. 2, 2, 149-151.
[32] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin's Report, November 1942.
[33] Jeha, 137.
[34] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin's Report, November 1942.

been particularly influential. Khalid Khalaf, a former student of his, describes him as "a great person and an Arab nationalist." Al-Shihab, who taught at al-ᶜAzma's school, recalls the comradely relationship between the headmaster and his Kuwaiti staff. He adds that the Syrian "worked hard to instill [his students with]… nationalist feeling and belonging to the Arab nation, emphasizing the importance of Arab unity and discarding the yoke of colonialism." Both men recall that al-ᶜAzma frequently enjoined his students to sing nationalist and martial anthems, including the aforementioned "The Lands of the Arabs are My Homeland" and "Lahat Ruʾus al-Hirab (The Spearheads are Glinting)." According to al-Shihab, he also delivered rousing speeches "filled with glorification of the Arabs and Arabism."[35]

The Syrian teachers, and al-ᶜAzma in particular, placed great emphasis on Scouting and physical education with a strongly Arab nationalist flavor.[36] Wakelin reported that in 1942, all four boys' schools in Kuwait town had Boy Scout troops, which "concentrate[d] chiefly on drill and marching."[37] The Scouts sang Arab nationalist anthems from Syria during their excursions, as well as during the public ᶜId celebrations at the ruler's palace.[38] Al-ᶜAzma also took his students on jogs around the town every morning. As they passed the British Political Agency, they defiantly belted out nationalist anthems.[39] The Syrians also injected political symbolism into the Educational Department's annual sports day by having the students carry banners with the colors of the Pan-Arab flag. This flag was also displayed at various school celebrations.[40] Finally, the Syrian teachers also sought to disseminate Arab nationalist ideas to society at large through visiting *dīwānīyyāt* in Kuwait town and even rural

[35] Khalid Khalaf, "Hanin: Khalid Khalaf Yuqallib Safahat al-Madi 1/2," Interview by Fawzi Jad al-Karim, *al-Nahar* August 29, 2010, 16; S. al-Shihab Vol 2., 155-159.
[36] Al-ᶜAzma, 117.
[37] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin's Report, November 1942.
[38] Al-ᶜAzma, 36, 104.
[39] S. al-Shihab Vol. 2, 158.
[40] Al-ᶜAzma, 118-119.

villages during Scouting trips.[41]

The Syrian teachers were not the only actors who fostered an Arab nationalist environment in the schools during this period; an Arab nationalist current was also growing among Kuwaiti teachers. With their political movement obliterated, Kuwait's nationalists retreated to what Chatterjee describes as the "spiritual domain," focusing on cultural activity whose political character was nonetheless evident. In the absence of other channels, the Educational Department served as the primary base for this activity, particularly as it employed a large proportion of Kuwait's proto-*effendiyya*. Indeed, unless nationalist activity within the educational field is taken into account, 1940s Kuwait appears to be virtually devoid of grassroots politics.

Kuwaiti teachers who had studied in Arab countries were at the forefront of this nationalist current. In 1942, the five Kuwaitis sent on scholarship to Baghdad's Rural Teachers' College graduated and returned home,[42] bringing the radical Arab nationalist ideology they had absorbed back with them. They were contractually obliged to become teachers in the government schools.[43] Among them was Khalid al-Musallam, who taught his students the rousing anti-imperialist anthems that he and his classmates sang during the Rashid ᶜAli Revolt.[44] Another example is the aforementioned scholarship student in Egypt Yusuf al-Badr, who returned to become "one of the more promising local teachers" after his release from prison in Palestine.[45] Over the course of the 1940s, increasing numbers of politicized graduates would return to work as teachers.

Kuwaiti teachers did not need to be educated abroad to espouse nationalist ideas. A case in point is ᶜAbd Allah Zakaria al-Ansari, who graduated from the Mubarakiyya

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[41] Ibid., 37, 104, 109-110.
[42] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Dusari, Interview by Milaiji, *Rijal wa-Tarikh*, 73; ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Musallam, Interview by Milaiji, *Rijal wa-Tarikh*, 141; Salih ᶜAbd al-Malik al-Salih, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 36; ᶜAbd Allah al-Muttawaᶜ, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 200; S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 237-238, 242-243.
[43] Husain, Interview by Khalaf Allah, 50; al-Khrafi, 810-811.
[44] S. al-Shihab Vol. 1, 239.
[45] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Pelly, 27/1/1944.

and taught at his father's private school before joining the Educational Department. In a later interview, he recalls his efforts to instill his students with a "patriotic and nationalist spirit." On one occasion, he brought them to tears by speaking about the "Arab nation and its backwardness, and its persecution at the hands of colonialism."[46] Al-Ansari also authored a highly nationalistic poem entitled "Arab Unity" to welcome the Syrian teachers to Kuwait.[47]

The activities of these Arab nationalist teachers were not limited to the classroom. Al-Musallam and al-Ansari each had *dīwānīyyāt* that served as cultural salons. Al-ᶜAzma describes them as successors of the by now defunct Literary Club, and recalls that they were "specialized in modern literature, and hardly a book is published in Syria, Iraq, or Egypt without the youth of these *dīwānīyyāt* knowing about it." These forums were attended by "a new class of youth possessing modern culture (*thaqāfa*)," i.e. the proto-*effendiyya*, who kept in touch with intellectual developments in the Arab world through the press.[48]

While Arab nationalist influence within the Educational Department was initially strong, it was not long before British interference began to undermine it. Following a visit by the Educational Adviser Wakelin to Kuwait in November 1942, the British authorities were unhappy to learn that the Educational Department had dealt directly with the Egyptian government, apparently considering this a violation of Kuwait's treaty obligations. However, the arrival of the Egyptian Educational Mission presented them with a fait accompli.[49] When the British challenged the ruler on this point, he stated that al-Shamlan was instructed to engage teachers privately and "did not have the right of approaching any foreign government."[50] The Political Agent was incredulous, stating that he was certain that the Educational Council had full knowledge of al-

[46] ᶜAbd Allah Zakaria al-Ansari, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 8-11.
[47] Al-Wuqayyan, *al-Qadiyya al-ᶜArabiyya,* 151-152.
[48] Al-ᶜAzma, 109-110.
[49] IOR/R/15/5/196: Hickinbotham to PR, 18/11/1942; Wakelin's Report, November 1942.
[50] IOR/R/15/5/196: Ruler to PA, 30/1/1943.

Shamlan's mission, and it was probable that the ruler did as well.[51]

The British nevertheless placed all blame for this transgression on al-Shamlan, who they also considered to be unqualified, and pressured the ruler to dismiss him as Director of Education. Shaykh Ahmad agreed but prevaricated, retaining al-Shamlan as director for the duration of the 1942-1943 academic year. At the outset of the following year, al-Shamlan was moved to another position within the Educational Department, retaining the same salary. This did not satisfy the British, who compelled the ruler to remove al-Shamlan from the department altogether. They also caused his Lebanese wife to be discharged from her job as headmistress of one of the girls' schools.[52]

British interference may have also contributed to the decision of all Syrian teachers but one to leave Kuwait after only one year. Al-ᶜAzma states that Wakelin employed a "colonial" approach to education in Kuwait, viewing it as merely a means for creating employees. This contradicted with the Syrians' "nationalist, progressive plan" that sought to raise a new generation of moral, fit, and principled Arabs. Al-ᶜAzma states that this disagreement was one of several factors that prevented the Syrian teachers from renewing their contracts.[53]

The departure of al-Shamlan and the Syrian teachers meant that the positions of Director of Education and Director of Studies were now empty. The British were quick to take advantage of this vacuum in leadership to impose greater control over the department and dilute its Arab nationalist orientation. After failing to halt Kuwait's burgeoning educational ties to Egypt, they decided to pursue their goals in collaboration with the Egyptian Educational Mission.

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[51] IOR/R/15/5/196: Hickinbotham to PR, 12/12/1942.
[52] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to PR, 3/12/1943; PR to PA, 24/11/1943; Wakelin to Hilali Pasha, 22/11/1943; Wakelin to Ruler, 15/11/1943; IOR/R/15/5/196: Ruler of Kuwait to Hickinbotham, 10/3/1943; PA to Ruler, 3/3/1943; Wakelin's Report, November 1942.
[53] Al-ᶜAzma, 116-117.

British Control & Nationalist Resistance, 1943-1945

While the British authorities recognized the value of the Egyptian teachers and scholarships,[54] they were wary of the political implications of official Egyptian funding for them. Over the course of the 1942-1943 school year, they lobbied the British Council to take over responsibility for subsidizing teachers and funding scholarships for Kuwait. They also requested that the Council appoint a full-time Director of Education for Kuwait, preferably an Englishman. A lack of funding combined with time and bureaucratic constraints meant that these proposals came to naught.[55] Wakelin therefore employed an alternative strategy, working in coordination with the Egyptian authorities to take control of education in Kuwait. While this strategy was at first remarkably successful, it met with staunch opposition from the grassroots Arab nationalist current, which eventually influenced the Educational Council.

Under the guise of assisting Kuwait's Educational Council, Wakelin inserted himself as an intermediary between it and the Egyptian authorities. He travelled to Cairo himself to engage new teachers and arrange accommodation for the Kuwaiti scholarship students. The teachers continued to be seconded and subsidized by the Egyptian government.[56] However, Wakelin handpicked the new crop, which included a female teacher and an Azharite cleric who he engaged privately and were not seconded from Cairo. Two teachers also carried on from the previous year, one of which was ʿAli Haikal, the former classmate of al-Shamlan. Wakelin also inserted a clause into the teachers' contracts preventing them from "correspond[ing] with the Ministry of

[54] IOR/R/15/5/196: Hickinbotham to PR, 12/12/1942; Wakelin's Report, November 1942.
[55] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin to PR, 15/9/1943; PA to PR, 31/8/1943; Ambassador Cairo to PR, 28/8/1943; PA to PR, 21/8/1943; Wakelin to PR, 17/8/1943; PR to Ambassador Cairo, 17/8/1943; Simon to Wakelin, 2/6/1943; Wakelin to PR, 27/6/1943; PA to PR, 20/6/1943; Wakelin to Dundas, 11/4/1943; Wakelin to PA, 27/3/1943.
[56] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin to PR, 15/9/1943.

Education or any official body in Egypt except through" himself.[57]

During the summer, the Kuwaiti Educational Council declared its intention to appoint Haikal as Director of Education.[58] Wakelin was quick to win him over and subject him to his authority. While still in Cairo, the two men met and agreed on a plan to drastically change both the administrative and educational systems within the Educational Department. [59] After the conclusion of this agreement, Wakelin recommended that the Kuwaiti Educational Council raise Haikal's salary,[60] and that the Egyptian Ministry of Education promote him.[61] He also praised him in his reports,[62] and invited him to visit Bahrain in the Spring of 1944 to study its educational system.[63] Finally, it is noteworthy that Haikal was appointed Director of Education, whereas in the past the senior Palestinian and Syrian teachers occupied the subordinate post of Director of Studies. The latter position was abolished. Haikal thus became second in command within the department, preceded only by its President Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir. Although the reason for this is unclear, it is possible that it was part of Wakelin's scheme of administrative centralization.

The plan agreed upon by Wakelin and Haikal clearly aimed to undermine Arab nationalist influence within the department. Its main points were "the replacement of all Syrian teachers in the boys' schools by Egyptians or local staff… a unified control of all schools, [and] a remodelling of the entire syllabus."[64] The latter point entailed replacing the Arab nationalist Iraqi curriculum with that of Egypt, which was based on Egyptian territorial nationalism and focused less on Arabic language and Islamic studies. The character of the Egyptian curriculum will be discussed in detail below. This was not

[57] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to PR, 2/12/1943; IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin to PR, 15/9/1943; Wakelin to PA, 8/9/1943; Ambassador Cairo to PA, 8/9/1943.
[58] IOR/R/15/5/196: PA to Wakelin, 7/9/1943; PA to Wakelin, 29/8/1943.
[59] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to PR, 2/12/1943.
[60] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Education Committee, 18/11/1943
[61] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Hilali Pasha, 22/11/1943.
[62] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to PR, 4/12/1943; Wakelin to PR, 2/12/1943.
[63] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Ruler, 26/3/1944; Wakelin to Ruler, 15/11/1943.
[64] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to PR, 2/12/1943.

sufficient for Wakelin. While establishing the Director of Education's sole authority over pedagogical affairs, he also made himself the ultimate arbiter of "problems arising from the choice of syllabus, books used in the schools method of teaching etc."[65] He exercised this authority by vetting the textbooks he imported from Egypt via the British Council in conjunction with the Political Agent, excluding those deemed "politically undesirable."[66] Wakelin also sought to diminish the Educational Council's influence by limiting its authority to financial matters.[67]

Secondly, by employing only Egyptian teachers and centralizing authority within the hands of the director, Wakelin aimed to limit factionalism within the staff and prevent particular schools from diverging from the official line. Wakelin issued a document outlining the rules all teachers had to follow. These affirmed the director's authority over all schools and headmasters and prevented any changes from being made without his written consent. Moreover, all staff members were forbidden from engaging "in any political activities." Finally, the document also reiterated the ban on any Egyptian teacher communicating directly with the Ministry of Education in Cairo.[68]

In December 1943, Wakelin boasted that he had "established real control of Koweit education."[69] However, by April 1944, he reported that "all was not well within the Department… [and] there was serious trouble among the staff." In Wakelin's version of events, two factions had emerged among the Egyptian teachers in November. One was led by Haikal and another by a headmaster and "mischief maker" named Muhammad ᶜAbd al-Munᶜim al-Najmi.[70] Motivated by petty jealousies, each faction sought to discredit the other, enlisting "the help of influential people and the local

[65] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to PR, 4/12/1943.
[66] IOR/R/15/5/197: Report, Wakelin, 4/12/1943; Wakelin to Simon, 1/12/1943; PA to Wakelin, 25/11/1943.
[67] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to PR, 4/12/1943.
[68] IOR/R/15/5/197: Duties of Teachers, Wakelin, 18/11/1943.
[69] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Highwood, 3/12/1943.
[70] Wakelin's report names him simply as "Abdul Moneim." His full name is taken from Salih al-Shihab, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 71-72.

staff."[71] However, it is clear from numerous accounts by Kuwaitis who were involved in the events that Wakelin was either oblivious to the true nature of the unrest or did not wish to admit it.

While varying slightly, the local accounts agree that the dispute began when a group of Kuwaiti teachers opposed Haikal for his subservience to Wakelin and his colonial British agenda.[72] Most of the accounts specify the reason for the opposition as the replacement of the Iraqi curriculum, which the teachers considered to be "Arab-Islamic"[73] and "serving the causes of the Arab nation."[74] The group, which numbered ten to twelve teachers, included all five graduates of the 1938 scholarship to Iraq, in addition to al-Ansari, al-Shihab, and other locally educated teachers. A few educated youth who were not teachers were also involved. The men held secret meetings and distributed handbills attacking Haikal.

In January 1944, the British Political Agent reported: "certain intrigues [are] afoot in the local schools against the Director of Education and his staff... The intriguers are reported to be Kuwait teachers and some outsiders."[75] On February 2nd, eight Kuwaitis were arrested, some of whom were trying to escape to Iraq. The President of the Educational Department had two of them publicly beaten in the Mubarakiyya schoolyard.[76] The local accounts add that some were also imprisoned, though prominent individuals soon interceded to have them released. There also occurred a student strike;

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[71] IOR/R/15/5/197: Report, Wakelin, 26/4/1944.
[72] Basim al-Lughani, *Watha'iq Kuwaitiyya*, Vol. 3 (Kuwait: 2014), 72-73; ᶜAbd Allah Zakaria al-Ansari, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, *Rijal fi Tarikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. 1, 312-315; Fahad al-Duwairi, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, *Rijal fi Tarikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. 3, 423-429; S. al-Shihab, Interview by Milaiji, 71-72; Salih ᶜAbd al-Malik al-Salih, *Muhadarat al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi li-Rabitat al-Ijtimaᶜiyyin* (Kuwait: 1968), 98-100, qtd. in *Tarikh al-Taᶜlim fi Dawlat al-Kuwait,* Vol. 2, 139; al-Dusari, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 256; al-Jabir, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 216-218; al-Musallam, Interview by Milaiji, 141-142; al-Rujaib, 147-148, 150; al-Hatim, 84-85.
[73] Al-Ansari, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 313.
[74] S. al-Shihab, Interview by Milaiji, 72.
[75] "Kuwait Intelligence Summary, 16-31 January 1944," *Political Diaries of the Persian Gulf*, Vol. 16 (Archive Editions, 1990), 13.
[76] "Kuwait Intelligence Summary, 1-15 February 1944," *Diaires*, Vol. 16, 32.

some sources state that the teachers led it,[77] while others maintain that it was held in protest at their imprisonment.[78] The Egyptian headmaster al-Najmi is also said to have supported the teachers' opposition to Haikal, thus tying it to the intra-Egyptian factionalism reported by Wakelin.[79]

Soon after cracking down on the teachers' opposition, Kuwait's educational authorities turned against Haikal after discovering that he had doctored examination results so as to discredit his rivals.[80] The Educational Council decided to fire him and asked Wakelin to find a successor. In his subsequent report on the events, which he submitted to the ruler, Wakelin agreed that "Haikal must go," but also recommended in very strong terms that his rival al-Najmi be dismissed. He acknowledged that the Educational Council opposed the latter's dismissal, but insisted upon it nonetheless.[81] The council interpreted Wakelin's report as a statement that al-Najmi would be dismissed regardless of its opposition, and now turned on the British adviser as well. It stated that Wakelin's recommendation contradicted an earlier agreement with him that al-Najmi would be retained for the duration of the academic year.[82]

The Educational Council also now objected to Wakelin's title of "Educational Adviser." The Political Agent stated that this was "possibly because it was thought that this opened the way to further administrative penetration on our side."[83] This is confirmed by Shaykh ʿAbd Allah al-Jabir's account, in which he states that the British "wanted to have a prominent role in administering education as in Bahrain, and wanted to appoint Wakelin as an adviser with the right to actively intervene in education, but we refused."[84] After the Political Agent pressed the ruler to dismiss al-Najmi on several

[77] Al-Jabir, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 216-217; al-Hatim, 84-85.
[78] Al-Dusari, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 256; al-Duwairi, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 427.
[79] S. al-Shihab, Interview by Milaiji, 72.
[80] IOR/R/15/5/197: Abdullah al-Jabir as-Subah to Wakelin, 1/7/1944; al-Rujaib, 147.
[81] IOR/R/15/5/197: Report, Wakelin, 26/4/1944.
[82] IOR/R/15/5/197: Abdullah al-Jabir as-Subah to Ruler, 17/6/1944.
[83] IOR/R/15/5/197: Prior to Boase, 6/5/1944.
[84] Al-Jabir, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 218.

occasions, he replied that he could not do so "without incurring the charge of allowing himself to be dictated by the Educational Adviser."[85]

By overplaying his hand, Wakelin did irreparable damage to the prestige of his position and to the British ability to influence education in Kuwait. There is no evidence that he sought to intervene to the same degree following this incident. His only major scheme was the creation of a hostel in Cairo for Kuwaiti scholarship students. However, as shall be seen, the institution that actually emerged differed drastically from the one he envisioned. In the fall of 1944, Wakelin chose Sadiq Hamdi as a replacement for Haikal,[86] though it appears that both the local and Egyptian authorities became more vigilant towards British interference after the Haikal incident. In the summer of 1946, the Egyptian Ministry of Education fired Hamdi because "of suspicion that he was too friendly with the British."[87] Unfortunately, further information regarding this incident is lacking. British plans to directly control education in Kuwait were dealt a deathblow when Wakelin's term ended in June 1945, and a successor was not appointed. The position of Educational Adviser was in effect abolished.[88]

Education Under Egyptian Control, 1945-1950

With the departure of the Syrian teachers and the British Educational Adviser, Egyptian control over Kuwait's Educational Department became virtually complete. The curriculum and textbooks were imported from Cairo, as was virtually all non-local staff. Perhaps ironically, this thorough Arabization of Kuwaiti education did not reinforce its Arab nationalist character. Although some individual Egyptian teachers

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[85] IOR/R/15/5/197: PA to Prior, 1/7/1944; PA to Prior, 6/6/1944.
[86] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Jackson, 25/9/1944.
[87] IOR/L/P&S/12/3759A: Intelligence Summary, August and September 1946.
[88] Wakelin's successor as Director of Education in Bahrain, K.M. Willey, fell ill shortly after being appointed and resigned. As far as can be ascertained, there are no references to him occupying the position of Educational Adviser to Kuwait. It is unclear if this is because he did not have time to take up this post or if the post was abolished for some other reason (e.g. the Educational Council's opposition). After Willey's departure, no suitable British candidate could be found to replace him. IOR/R/15/2/839: Belgrave to Galloway, 28/1/1946; Pelly to PR, 21/8/1945; IOR/R/15/1/720: Administration Report, 1945, 2; For details see Louis Allday, "Cultural Propaganda in Informal Empire: The British Council in the Persian Gulf [provisional title]" (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, In progress).

had Arab nationalist inclinations, the same cannot be said of the particularistic, Europhile Egyptian curriculum. During this phase, Arab nationalism ceased to be inculcated in a top-down manner in Kuwaiti schools. Rather, it spread on the grassroots level through local teachers, and from 1948, a growing Palestinian staff. These groups challenged Egyptian hegemony, leading to factional struggles within the department. Furthermore, with the political arena severely restricted, the educational sector became the primary base for nationalist activity in the country, and served as a launching pad for several cultural-cum-political ventures.

A number of incidents and developments attest to the increased Egyptian control over education in Kuwait after 1945. For instance, the aforementioned replacement of the allegedly pro-British Director of Education in 1946 reportedly occurred "without any kind of consultation with the [Kuwaiti] State authorities."[89] In 1947, the succeeding director held a "sumptuous tea party" on King Faruq's birthday, to which he invited local and foreign dignitaries.[90] The schools were given a half day off, and a Kuwaiti observer remarked that this was the first time that a foreign ruler apart from the British monarch was honored in this manner.[91] The King of Egypt's birthday continued to be celebrated in the department in subsequent years.[92]

Egyptian influence increased in tandem with the expansion of Kuwait's educational system. This was made possible by the shaykhdom's increasing wealth following the beginning of oil exports in 1946.[93] The number of boys' and girls' schools climbed from eight in the academic year 1945-1946 to seventeen in 1949-1950, while the sum total of students in Kuwait town rose from 1,902 to 4,649 in the same period.[94]

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[89] IOR/R/15/5/198: PR to Tandy, 27/3/1947.
[90] IOR/L/P&S/12/3759A: Intelligence Summary, 1-14 February 1947.
[91] Al-Rumi, 125.
[92] "ʿId al-Faruq fi al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha,* March 1948, 51.
[93] Zahlan, *The Making,* 39.
[94] These statistics exclude the village schools, where Egyptian and other Arab expatriate teachers were not employed. "Ihsaʾiyyat Taʿlimiyya," *al-Biʿtha*, December 1949, 290; "Ihsaʾiyyat," *al-Biʿtha*, January 1949, 47.

A key milestone in this expansion was the Educational Department's introduction of an ambitious development plan in 1947-1948, which entailed the building of new schools and facilities and necessitated the quadrupling of the department's budget.[95]

The plan included the establishment of a Religious Academy under the direction of two clerics seconded by al-Azhar University.[96] The academy, which opened in late 1947, followed al-Azhar's curriculum, allowing its top graduates to be sent on scholarship to the university.[97] Its popularity necessitated the secondment of two further Azharite clerics the following year.[98] Also in 1947, the Egyptian authorities seconded a female inspector to take charge of the girls' schools,[99] though for unknown reasons she resigned towards the end of the 1947-1948 school year.[100] The number of Egyptian teachers gradually increased from twelve males and one female in 1943-1944 to fifteen males and eight females in 1948-1949,[101] before jumping to 38 males and 17 females the following year.[102]

As Egyptian educational assistance to Kuwait increased and diversified, it branched out into other fields, spreading Egyptian influence to other state institutions. Shortly after work began on the Educational Department's development plan in mid-1947, the Egyptian government sent a Medical Mission to Kuwait. Its head became Director of the Health Department.[103] However, this mission was terminated in the fall of 1948 under unclear circumstances.[104] A more enduring project was the secondment

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[95] Taha al-Suwaifi, "al-Taʿlim fi al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha*, Septmebr 1947, 170-173.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Muhammad ʿAbd al-Raʾuf, "Al-Maʿhad al-Dini al-Jadid bi-l-Kuwait," *Kazima,* September 1948, 97; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha*, November 1947, 247.
[98] "Anbaʾ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* October 1948, 137; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha*, January 1948, 13.
[99] Muhammad ʿAli Rida and Hafiz Ahmad Hamdi, *al-Taʿlim fi Imarat al-Kuwait* (Cairo: Matbaʿat Wizarat al-Maʿarif al-ʿUmumiyya, 1952), 5.
[100] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha*, May 1948, 86.
[101] "Ihsaʾiyyat," *al-Biʿtha*, January 1949, 47.
[102] "Ihsaʾiyyat Taʿlimiyya," *al-Biʿtha*, December 1949, 290.
[103] IOR/L/P&S/12/3759A: Intelligence Summary, 16-31 October 1947; "al-Biʿtha al-Sihiyya," *al-Biʿtha*, October 1947, 228; "Idarat Sihhat al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha*, September 1947, 183.
[104] "PR to Burrows, 16/9/1948," *Diaries*, Vol. 18, 102.

of a qadi by al-Azhar to head Kuwait's shari^{c}a courts in early 1949.[105] By the end of the year, the university had seconded two further qadis to Kuwait,[106] and in 1950 it was reported that the Egyptian Ministry of Justice would also second a state prosecutor (though it is not clear if this actually occurred).[107] In the subsequent decade, Egyptian technical assistance to the Kuwaiti government would expand greatly.

Yet another marker of Cairo's dominance over education in Kuwait was that Egypt became virtually the sole destination for the shaykhdom's growing scholarship program. As has been stated, the Egyptian government provided scholarships to eleven Kuwait students in 1942. These students arrived in Egypt in 1943, along with six others funded by their families and overseen by the Kuwaiti authorities.[108] In 1945, the Egyptian authorities accepted a further 37 students.[109] Smaller groups of scholarship students continued to be sent to Egypt throughout the decade.[110] Kuwaiti scholarship students in Egypt totalled 55 in 1946 and 1947, 49 in 1948, 52 in 1949,[111] and 53 in 1950.[112] In 1947, it was reported that their number was the largest of any Arab country relative to its population.[113]

As the Kuwaiti Educational Department's resources increased, it appears to have taken over financial responsibility for the scholarships from the Egyptian government.[114] Nevertheless, several factors ensured that Egypt remained practically

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[105] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, March 1949, 91.
[106] "PR to Burrows, 7/11/1949," *Diaries*, Vol. 18, 418; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, December 1949, 268-269.
[107] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, August 1950, 229.
[108] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Hilali Pasha, 22/11/1943.
[109] "Bait al-Kuwait bi-Misr," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, Vol. 1, No. 1, ND, 4.
[110] "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, December 1949, 278; "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, September 1948, 179; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, May 1948, 86.
[111] "Ihsa$^{\circ}$iyyat," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, Jan 1949, 47.
[112] ^{c}Abd al-^{c}Aziz al-Gharaballi, "Hawl al-Ta^{c}lim al-Hadith fi al-Kuwait," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, March 1950, 93.
[113] "Bait al-Kuwait bi-Misr," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, September 1947, 174.
[114] As shall be discussed below, the Kuwaiti Educational Department took over responsibility for its students' room and board by establishing a hostel for them in 1945. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Egyptian government funded the scholarships provided to Kuwaiti students after 1945. A recipient of a scholarship in 1948 recalls in an interview that it was funded by the Kuwaiti Educational Department. Jasim al-Qatami, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, *Rijal fi Tarikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. 1, 92. This is supported by the fact that in 1948, the Educational Department decreed that it would fund all Kuwaiti students residing in its hostel who were financed by their families. "Fi Bayt al-Kuwait," *al-Bi^{c}tha,* December 1948, 255.

the only destination for Kuwaiti scholarships in the 1940s. Firstly, Kuwait's Educational Department was unable to offer a complete five years of secondary education throughout the 1940s.[115] Students wishing to complete their secondary education thus had to do so abroad. The vast majority of Kuwaiti scholarship students in Egypt were in fact enrolled in secondary schools. In the spring of 1948, only eight were attending universities.[116]

Secondly, the fact that Kuwaiti schools were under Egyptian administration made Egypt the most logical and convenient destination for secondary school students. Throughout the decade, the Egyptian curriculum was followed in Kuwait with only "slight modifications" to certain history and geography textbooks to include matter on Kuwait and the Gulf. A report by the Egyptian Ministry of Education emphasized that these modifications were made "under the direction of" the Egyptian Director of Education.[117] This coordination allowed the ministry to recognize the Kuwaiti fourth-year secondary certificate in the late 1940s, which further facilitated the study of Kuwaitis in Egypt.[118]

Finally, Egypt's cultural prestige in the region was a key factor that made it, in the words of one pupil, "the Kaʿba of Kuwaiti students."[119] Another Kuwaiti scholarship student describes Egypt as "a mother to the Arab countries, which derive their civilization from it. It is thus no surprise that the Nile valley is a qibla to the sons of Arabism (*ʿUrūba*) who aspire to drink from the fountains of science and knowledge." He goes on to highlight the importance of the Egyptian media in enhancing this prestige, stating: "I encountered Egypt twice, the first time while still in my country through books, the press, and the radio, and it captivated my imagination."[120]

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[115] See chapter four.
[116] IOR/R/15/5/198: Hay to McNeil, 17/11/1948; PR to Tandy, 27/3/1947.
[117] Rida and Hamdi, 6.
[118] "ʿIlaqat al-Kuwait al-Thaqafiyya bi-l-Bilad al-ʿArabiyya," *al-Biʿtha*, January 1949, 9.
[119] Yaʿqub al-Hamad, "Lamha Hawl al-Taʿlim al-Thanawi fi al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha*, April 1949, 126.
[120] Ahmad al-ʿAmir, "Hadhihi Misr," *al-Biʿtha*, May 1947, 112.

Addressing Egyptian teachers seconded to Kuwait, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, then director of the Kuwaiti students' hostel in Cairo (see below), states:

> The Kuwaitis know you well from afar, they know you as the educators and leaders of the Arab people… [They] know you through your apostles who arrive each year bearing the fruits of the mind… They know Egypt thoroughly through its literature and press, which they imbibe. You will find that they know everything about your country.[121]

An editorial in the student magazine *al-Biᶜtha* similarly describes Egypt as "the artery that supplies [the Arab] states with the most important means of attaining culture (*thaqāfa*), particularly at this juncture in their history, when they have started to… unify the means of their social and cultural lives."[122]

Despite Egypt's cultural prominence in the Arab world, the Egyptian administration of Kuwait's Educational Department had an ambivalent effect on Arab nationalist influence within this institution. On the one hand, Egyptian educational assistance to Kuwait was framed in Arab nationalist terms, reflecting Cairo's bid for Pan-Arab leadership. At the celebration of King Faruq's birthday in 1947, the Egyptian Director of Education spoke of the monarch's efforts to aid the Arab states, calling him "the greatest *mujāhid* in the way of Islam and Arabism (*ᶜUrūba*)." He also referred to the Kuwaitis as "brothers in Arabism."[123] The director later employed similar rhetoric while addressing a new group of Egyptian teachers seconded to Kuwait. He proclaimed that Faruq, "the king of Arabism and the preeminent Arab (*ᶜaẓīm al-ᶜArab*)," dispatched these educational missions with the intention of "strengthening cultural ties between Egypt and the Arab states."[124]

On the other hand, the Educational Department under the Egyptian Educational Mission did not inculcate Arab nationalist ideology in a structured, top-down manner as under the Syrians and Palestinians. This was mainly due to the character of the Egyptian

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[121] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "Tahiyyat Bait al-Kuwait li-Biᶜthat al-Taᶜlim al-Misriyya," *al-Biᶜtha*, October 1947, 214.
[122] "Bait al-Kuwait fi Thalathat Aᶜwam," *al-Biᶜtha*, January 1949, 5.
[123] "ᶜId Milad al-Faruq fi al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, Vol. 1, No. 4, ND, 60.
[124] Taha al-Suwaifi, "Ila al-Biᶜtha al-Misriyya fi al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, October 1947, 213.

curriculum, which continued to emphasize Egyptian territorial nationalism and Pharaonic identity despite the growing Arab nationalist mood in Egypt.[125] Moreover, it focused on "Western-derived, 'modern' subject-matter" at the expense of Arabic language and Islamic studies, thus separating students "from their Arab-Muslim heritage."[126] There is also no evidence that Scouting and physical education in Kuwait retained their nationalist character under the Egyptian administration.

While disseminating Arab nationalist ideology was thus not a matter of policy for the Egyptian Educational Mission, some of its members did hold nationalist views. Information on most individual Egyptian teachers in Kuwait is sketchy, as in the case of the Arabic teacher Ahmad al-Anbabi, who arrived in Kuwait in 1947-1948 and was described by a colleague as "an eloquent orator and an enthusiast of Arab unity." Al-Anbabi was a graduate of Cairo's Dar al-ᶜUlum.[127] This training college for teachers of Arabic and religion differed markedly from Egypt's Westernized universities in combining modern and traditional education. It is argued to have shaped the ideologies of those who studied there, particularly leading Islamists such as Hasan al-Banna.[128]

The most prominent Arab nationalist among the Egyptian teachers in Kuwait, Ahmad ᶜAnbar, was also a graduate of Dar al-ᶜUlum and a teacher of Arabic. In contrast to most of his colleagues, whose presence in Kuwait was transient, ᶜAnbar settled in the country and eventually gained citizenship. For this reason, along with his poetry and his active participation in scholastic and public events, there is much more information on him. ᶜAnbar taught in Kuwait between the 1946-1947 and 1950-1951

[125] Barak A. Salmoni, "Historical Consciousness for Modern Citizenship," in *Re-Envisioning Egypt 1919-1952*, ed. Arthur Goldschmidt et. al. (Cairo, New York: AUC Press, 2005), 187-188.
[126] Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 17.
[127] Muhammad Mitwali, "Kishk al-Saqr," *al-Biᶜtha*, March 1948, 64; "Hadarat Aᶜdaᵓ al-Biᶜtha al-Taᶜlimiyya al-Misriyya," *al-Biᶜtha*, October 1947, 228.
[128] Lois Armine Aroian, "Education, Language, and Culture in Modern Egypt: Dār al-ᶜUlūm and its Graduates, 1872-1923" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1978), 341-342; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining,* 16-17.

school years, but returned in 1952-1953 and remained thereafter.[129] In a 1947 article, he recalls that he was motivated to teach in Kuwait because he considered himself "a soldier in the service of our greater Arab homeland."[130]

The themes of Arab unity, rebirth, and resistance to foreign aggression dominate the numerous poems ᶜAnbar wrote in Kuwait in the late 1940s, most of which he delivered at public functions.[131] For example, at a homecoming reception for Shaykh Ahmad al-Jabir in 1947, he addressed the following lines to the Kuwaiti people:

> And my heart loves you, for we are one tribe,
> united by the glory of Arabism and by our origin.
> We here are [as] in Egypt, there is no difference between us;
> The sons of the Arabs are at home anywhere in their homeland.[132]

During the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, ᶜAnbar participated in a series of fundraising meetings held by a committee of Kuwaiti merchants. He recited several poems that called on the Arabs to unite in support of Palestine and urged the audience to donate generously.[133] Furthermore, he extended his pro-Palestinian activity to the educational sphere by writing a play that was performed at the secondary school. It portrays Jewish immigrants deceiving and betraying the Palestinians, who rise up and seek the help of their Arab brothers. Fighters from various Arab countries, including Kuwait, arrive to save the day.[134] ᶜAnbar also recited poems at school events such as the Prophet's birthday celebrations, but none of these could be located.[135]

Towards the end of the 1940s, the Egyptianization of education in Kuwait gave rise to British worries. Following Wakelin's departure, British Council representatives from outside the Gulf occasionally visited Kuwait to monitor the state of its

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[129] Ahmad ᶜAnbar, *Min Wahi al-Kuwait fi ᶜIshrin ᶜAman* (Kuwait: Matbaᶜat Muqahwi, 1966), 11-12; "Ahmad ᶜAnbar," *Muᶜjam al-Babtain li-Shuᶜaraᵓ al-ᶜArabiyya,* http://www.almoajam.org/poet_details.php?id=755 (accessed 5/3/2016).
[130] Ahmad ᶜAnbar, "Min al-Qahira ila al-Kuwait, wa-bi-l-ᶜAks," *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1947, 180.
[131] ᶜAnbar, *Wahi al-Kuwait,* 20-42, 56-57.
[132] Ibid., 30.
[133] Ibid., 37-44; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, January 1948, 12.
[134] ᶜAnbar, *Wahi al-Kuwait,* 244-269.
[135] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, December 1947, 271.

education.[136] Some of their reports, as well as those of the local British authorities, voiced concern over the excessive degree of control exercised by the Egyptian Educational Mission.[137] Others praised the Egyptian teachers' effectiveness, with one arguing that while they "naturally" engaged in "pro-Egyptian propaganda," this was not "subversive" or "anti-British."[138] However, developments in nearby Bahrain, where Egyptian teachers were apparently more politicized, influenced the British to encourage the training of local teachers with the goal of reducing dependence upon Egyptian staff.[139] This policy does not seem to have had any effect in Kuwait. In addition, Kuwait's Educational Council rebuffed proposals by the British Council to employ Englishmen as teachers.[140] In the case of Kuwait, the British were most concerned about the students studying in Egypt on scholarship, and focused their efforts on this issue. This will be discussed in detail shortly.

Local Teachers: The New Nationalist Vanguard

During the mid-1940s, it was not Arab expatriates but local teachers who were most forceful and consistent in pursuing an Arab nationalist educational agenda. The current received a new leader with the arrival of the zealous Arab nationalist teacher and poet Ahmad al-Saqqaf. A native of the Sultanate of Lahj, he received a scholarship to undergo secondary education in Baghdad in 1936 or 1937, later joining the Law College.[141] Through school activities, the Muthanna Club, and gatherings hosted by his Syrian teacher ʿUthman al-Hurani, he mingled with prominent Arab nationalists such as Satiʿ al-Husri, Darwish al-Miqdadi, Kazim al-Sulh, and Yunus al-Sabʿawi.[142] Most of

[136] BW 114/4: Covington to Director Middle East Dept., 23/5/1949.
[137] BW 114/11: Craig-Bennett to British Council 11/5/1950; Report, Keight, November 1949; IOR/R/15/5/198: PR to PA, 3/11/1949; PR to Tandy, 27/3/1947.
[138] IOR/R/15/5/198: PR to Tandy, 22/1/1948; PR to Tandy, 27/3/1947.
[139] Allday.
[140] BW 114/11: Report, Keight, November 1949; BW 114/4: Highwood to Lees, 14/7/1948.
[141] Ahmad Bakri ʿAsla, *Ahmad al-Saqqaf: al-Qabid ʿala Jamr al-Ibdaʿ* (Kuwait: Rabitat al-Udabaʾ, 2008), 11-13; al-Khrafi, 737.
[142] Al-Saqqaf, *Hikayat,* 172-174, 187.

these men were members of the Red Book Group, which al-Saqqaf joined.[143]

While in secondary school, al-Saqqaf also cofounded an Arab nationalist student group called Jamᶜiyyat al-Ḍād,[144] whose activities included holding lectures on Arab nationalism and fundraising for Palestine's Arab Revolt.[145] During the Rashid ᶜAli Revolt, he enlisted in a student militia formed by the Iraqi minister and Red Book Group leader Yunus al-Sabᶜawi and led by the Palestinian fighter ᶜAbd al-Qadir al-Husaini. He was wounded while fighting the British, and was apparently unable to complete his law degree following the British occupation.[146]

In the academic year 1944-1945, al-Saqqaf moved to Kuwait, where he became an Arabic teacher.[147] The reasons behind this move are unclear. However, a possible explanation is provided by Muhammad al-Saddah, who became a teacher in 1949 and collaborated with al-Saqqaf in nationalist activism. He maintains that the Educational Council member Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf engaged al-Saqqaf due to their common membership of the Red Book Group.[148] The group had all but disintegrated at the time of al-Saqqaf's arrival in Kuwait.[149] However, al-Saqqaf was the first of many former members of the group to work for or collaborate with Kuwait's Educational Department, indicating that the interpersonal networks forged within the organization persisted after its demise.

Al-Saqqaf soon became a dynamo of Arab nationalist cultural activity in Kuwait, both within the educational sphere and outside it. His leadership of the local Arab nationalist current was facilitated by his swift integration into Kuwaiti society; by

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[143] Jeha, 439.
[144] I.e. the letter *ḍād* in the Arabic alphabet, which has symbolic significance due to its supposed uniqueness to the Arabic language. H. Fleisch, "Ḍād," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* http://www.brillonline.nl/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/dad-SIM_1651 (accessed 5/3/2016).
[145] Al-Saqqaf, *Hikayat,* 181.
[146] Al-Saqqaf, *Hikayat,* 193-201; ᶜAsla, 13, 20.
[147] Ahmad al-Saqqaf, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 269.
[148] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[149] Jeha, 120.

around 1946 he had already married a Kuwaiti.[150] Within the classroom, al-Saqqaf recalls that his students often asked him to talk about the Palestinian cause, with which he was well acquainted due to his association with leading Palestinian activists in Iraq.[151] In 1948, he also took advantage of the Educational Department's celebrations of religious events to recite rousing Arab nationalist poems on Palestine.[152] Al-Saqqaf also recalls that in the 1947-1948 academic year, he led a group of secondary schoolboys in a pro-Palestine demonstration, which left the schoolyard and marched through nearby streets.[153] It is unclear if this is the same incident referred to in a British report from December 1947, which states that students were planning to protest against the partition of Palestine but ceased after the ruler threatened to flog the ringleaders.[154]

Al-Saqqaf's influence on his students is clear in the case of ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain (al-Rumi),[155] who went on to become a teacher, poet, and prominent Arab nationalist. Husain describes his former teacher as the "most effective of those who implanted nationalist ideology [within me], having come from revolutionary Iraq."[156] However, Husain had already began assimilating Arab nationalist ideas before al-Saqqaf's arrival, showing that the latter was building on the work of the pre-existing nationalist current within the Educational Department. Husain recalls that as a sixth primary year student in 1943, he published his first article on "the state of the Arab nation" in a wall magazine edited by his Kuwaiti teacher.[157]

ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain went on to study in Egypt on scholarship, though he

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[150] Al-Saqqaf, Interview by Milaiji, 269; ᶜAsla, 13.
[151] Al-Saqqaf, Interview by Milaiji, 270.
[152] "Ya Sakib al-Damᶜ," *Kazima,* November 1948, 177; "Min Ilham al-Nabi," *Kazima,* September 1948, 103.
[153] Al-Saqqaf, Interview by Milaiji, 270.
[154] IOR/L/P&S/12/3759A: Intelligence Summary, 1-15 December 1947.
[155] Though he was from the al-Rumi family, like others at the time, e.g. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, he did not go by his surname.
[156] ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain, "ᶜAbd Allah Husain Yatajawwal fi Huqul al-Siyasa, al-Adab, al-Diblumasiyya," Interveiw, *al-Nahda*, October 20, 1979, 35.
[157] The interview lists the teacher as ᶜAbd Allah al-Dusari of the Mubarakiyya School. However, there is no mention of a teacher with this name in primary or secondary sources. It is probable that the teacher in question was therefore ᶜAbd al-Aziz al-Dusari, who returned from Iraq to teach at the Mubarakiyya in 1943. ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain, "al-Ustadh ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain," *al-Majalis,* May 21, 1986.

returned in 1947 before completing his secondary degree and became a teacher.[158] Like his mentor al-Saqqaf, he influenced others to espouse Arab nationalism. The nationalist Muhammad al-Saddah, who became a teacher in 1949 after completing his second year of secondary school, recalls that Husain left an impression on him as a student and a young teacher. He refers to him as "my instructor in nationalist activism and attending to Arab causes and culture."[159] This demonstrates the extent to which, in the 1940s, grassroots nationalist networks took root in Kuwaiti schools and became endogenous.

With the arrival of al-Saqqaf, the Arab nationalist current based within the Educational Department made several attempts to engage in cultural activity beyond the schools. It was al-Saqqaf who initiated the first of these attempts by organizing an "itinerant literary club" in late 1945, which entailed holding seminars at a different *dīwānīyya* each week. Various notables and teachers hosted the seminars, including the Educational Council member Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf.[160] Al-Saqqaf recalls that the "club" brought together Kuwait's nationalist youth, and was "a source of nationalist ideas."[161] It continued until the summer of 1946, after which the ruler decided that the seminars were too political and ordered them stopped. According to al-Saqqaf, al-Nisf defended the "club" to the ruler, lending credence to al-Saddah's claim regarding the existence of ties between the two men.[162]

Al-Saqqaf's roving literary seminar whetted the appetites of Kuwait's educated youth for a bona fide cultural club. The impetus to establish such a club originated with Kuwaiti students studying at the AUB, who will be discussed in detail below. In the spring of 1946, they broached the idea to their friends in Kuwait (including the ex-

[158] Al-Khrafi, 1083.
[159] Al-Saddah, 9, 29.
[160] Ahmad al-Saqqaf, Introduction to *Kazima* (Kuwait: CRSK, 2001), 9; Idem, Interview by Milaiji, 269.
[161] Ahmad al-Saqqaf, *Tatawwur al-Waʿi al-Qawmi fi al-Kuwait* (Kuwait: Rabitat al-Udabaʾ, 1983), 9.
[162] Al-Saqqaf, Interview by Milaiji, 269; al-Saqqaf, *Tatawwur*, 9; al-Saqqaf, introduction to *Kazima*, 9.

teacher ᶜAbd Allah Zakaria al-Ansari[163]) and their compatriots studying in Egypt.[164] The idea was well received by the teachers and other educated youth in Kuwait, who held a meeting to elect the club's board in the fall of 1946.[165] Among the participants were seven of those who had opposed the changing of the curriculum in 1943-1944,[166] as well as Ahmad al-Sarhan, former secretary of the Patriotic Youths' Bloc. Al-Ansari was elected director of the club, the Iraq graduate al-Salih became secretary, and Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir was appointed president.[167] The club's founders secured the ruler's assent through the intercession of Yusuf Ahmad al-Ghanim, father of one of the aforementioned AUB students and a former member of the Red Book Group.[168] However, a squabble over leadership positions caused the club to shut down before it could commence its activity.[169]

The failed attempts to form a cultural club in Kuwait gave rise to a new cultural project that was far more successful: *Kazima* magazine (1948-1949). This endeavor was the result of cooperation between the teacher-based nationalist current and likeminded members of the Educational Council. This cooperation was already evident in al-Nisf's hosting and defense of al-Saqqaf's "itinerant literary club." The key nationalist councilmen, al-Nisf and al-Saniᶜ, not only retained their seats on the Educational Council in the second half of the decade,[170] but also greatly increased their influence within the government. In 1946, the ruler appointed both men to the Shura Council,[171]

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[163] Al-Ansari resigned his teaching job after his imprisonment during the 1943-1944 events. al-Ansari, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 319.
[164] The AUB students were Ahmad al-Khatib, Marzuq Fahad al-Marzuq, and ᶜAbd Allah Yusuf al-Ghanim. al-Khatib, 63-68.
[165] Al-Saqqaf, *Tatawwur,* 27.
[166] These were: Salih ᶜAbd al-Malik al-Salih, ᶜAbd Allah Zakaria al-Ansari, ᶜAbd al-Wahhab al-ᶜAdwani, Fahad al-Duwairi, Ibrahim al-Muqahwi, Hmud al-Muqahwi, and Saᶜud al-Kharji. The source is an interview with Salih ᶜAbd al-Malik al-Salih. *Tarikh al-Taᶜlim fi Dawlat al-Kuwait,* Vol. 2, 320.
[167] Ibid.
[168] The youth were not aware of his affiliation with the Red Book Group at this time. al-Khatib, 69, 124.
[169] *Tarikh al-Taᶜlim fi Dawlat al-Kuwait,* Vol. 2, 320; al-Khatib, 69.
[170] "Kuwait Diary, 1-15 June 1949," *Diaries*, Vol. 18, 322; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, January 1949, 34.
[171] IOR/L/P&S/12/3759A: Intelligence Summary, August and September 1946.

and made al-Sani[c] Director of the Municipality.[172] Al-Nisf, meanwhile, became Director of the Health Department in 1948.[173]

When in 1947 the Educational Department established the first ever printing press in the country, al-Saqqaf seized the opportunity to propose the publication of a literary magazine in conjunction with [c]Abd al-Hamid al-Sani[c]. The latter secured the Educational Council's approval and became the magazine's license holder, while the former became its editor. *Kazima* was the second magazine to be published locally.[174] Named after a historic Islamic settlement in Kuwait, it adopted a strongly Arab nationalist tone, particularly in championing the Palestinian cause. It featured contributions from local teachers and intellectuals, Arab expatriate teachers, Kuwaiti students studying abroad, and, significantly, women.[175]

Kazima reveals the extent to which cultural activity in 1940s Kuwait served political, Arab nationalist ends. In an editorial, al-Saqqaf stresses the key role played by poets and writers in the struggle of the Arab nation.[176] Indeed, *Kazima* contains a great deal of rousing nationalist poetry, much of it composed by the editor.[177] [c]Abd al-Razzaq al-Basir, a religious scholar and writer who had been a leading member of the Patriotic Youths' Bloc in the 1930s,[178] similarly states: "it is the jihad of the writer that is the most beneficial and effective because he disseminates culture (*thaqāfa*) within his nation, and culture is the cure for all ills."[179] [c]Abd al-[c]Aziz al-Gharaballi, a teacher who

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[172] Al-Sani[c], Interview by Milaiji, 309.
[173] "Kuwait Diary, 1-15 October 1948," *Diaries*, Vol. 18, 140.
[174] Al-Saqqaf, Introduction to *Kazima*, 9-11; al-Saqqaf, *Tatawwur* 27; al-Sani[c], Interview by Milaiji, 317.
[175] See for example: [c]Abd Allah Ahmad Husain, "Ayn al-Wahj al-Muqaddas?" *Kazima*, February 1949, 284; "Ihtiram al-Fatat," *Kazima*, December 1948, 211; [c]Abd al-Hamid al-Sani[c], "Filistin," and Um Usama, "Banat Sahyon," *Kazima*, July 1948, 29-30. More examples will be cited below.
[176] Ahmad al-Saqqaf, "Ijram al-Fan," *Kazima,* November 1948, 159.
[177] [c]Abd Allah Sinan, "Nida[c]," and Hamid al-Hmud, "Min Wahi al-Dhikra," *Kazima*, December 1948, 215-216; Ahmad al-Saqqaf, "Ya Sakib al-Dam[c]," *Kazima*, November 1948, 177; "Damiru Tal Abib," and Ahmad al-Saqqaf, "Min Ilham al-Nabi," *Kazima*, September 1948, 103-105; [c]Abd Allah Zakaria, "Filistin fi Majlis al-Amn," *Kazima*, August 1948, 66; Ahmad al-Sayyid [c]Umar, "[c]Alam al-Kuwait," *Kazima*, July 1948, 39.
[178] Hashim, 111, 527.
[179] [c]Abd al-Razzaq al-Basir, "al-[c]Alam al-[c]Arabi," *Kazima,* July 1948, 42.

had just been appointed Secretary of the Educational Department,[180] writes on the role of literature (*adab*) in morally uplifting the nation. He argues that the best form is "nationalist literature, which represents national pride, the traits of heroism, and the beauty of sacrifice."[181] Finally, the nationalist writer ᶜAbd Allah ᶜAli al-Saniᶜ defends his focus on classical Arab history by emphasizing the centrality of historical consciousness to national awareness and strength, a principle demonstrated by the Arabs' Zionist enemies.[182]

It was not long before *Kazima* became too overtly political for the ruler, who closed it down after its February 1949 issue. Moreover, its editor was dismissed from his teaching job, but was allowed to return after a short while. According to al-Saqqaf, the ruler's ire was provoked by an editorial that criticized the Arab states for failing Palestine, and argued that protests and fundraising were not enough.[183] Despite its short lifespan, Muhammad al-Saddah recalls *Kazima*'s importance "in raising patriotic and national awareness and connecting the Kuwaiti people to Arab causes."[184] Moreover, alongside the other limited attempts to forge a cultural sphere in the 1940s, the publication provided a foundation for much more substantial activism in the subsequent decade.

The Palestinian Threat to Egyptian Hegemony

In 1948, the Arab nationalist current within Kuwait's Educational Department was strengthened by the arrival of a new element. With the Arab-Israeli War ongoing, the Educational Council decided to employ Palestinian teachers at the outset of the 1948-1949 academic year.[185] The Palestinian Khayri Abu al-Jubayn, who became a

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[180] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* July 1948, 132; al-Khrafi, 876-877.
[181] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Gharaballi, "Nahnu wa-l-Adab," *Kazima,* July 1948, 25.
[182] ᶜAbd Allah ᶜAli al-Saniᶜ, "Fikra Khatiᵓa," *Kazima,* September 1948, 89-92.
[183] Ahmad al-Saqqaf, "Fima Yatahaddathun?" *Kazima,* February 1949, 273; al-Saqqaf, Introduction to *Kazima*, 10-11; "Kuwait Diary, 1-15 April 1949," *Diaries,* Vol. 18, 280.
[184] Al-Saddah, 14.
[185] "Anbaᵓ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* August 1948, 101.

teacher in Kuwait that year, states the council was motivated by sympathy for the Palestinians. He recalls that the councilman Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf was particularly enthusiastic, and personally travelled to Damascus to engage the new teachers.[186]

Among this first group of eighteen Palestinian teachers was ʿAbd al-Latif al-Salih, who had previously taught in Kuwait between 1939 and 1943.[187] He was the first of a number of Kuwait veterans to return that year. In November, a further three Palestinian teachers arrived from Egypt, including al-Salih's former colleague and fellow Dar al-ʿUlum graduate Muhammad Najm. Trapped in a refugee camp, he had made contact with the Kuwaiti Educational Department, which promptly reengaged him.[188] Another factor that encouraged the hiring of Palestinian teachers was the appointment of the Lebanese ʿAbd al-Latif al-Habbal, a former employee of the Palestine Mandate's Educational Department, as General Inspector of Kuwait's schools.[189] He arrived from Lebanon with yet another group of Palestinian teachers in November.[190] The total number of Palestinian teachers thus reached 21 by January 1949,[191] and Abu al-Jubayn lists a total of 28 for the 1948-1949 academic year.[192]

Within less than a year, the Palestinian teachers came to outnumber the 21-strong Egyptian Educational Mission. What's more, they were not the only new arrivals. In the summer of 1948, the Educational Department reengaged Iqbal al-Habbal, wife of the former director ʿAbd al-Latif al-Shamlan, as Inspector of Girls' Schools. She replaced the female inspector seconded by the Egyptian government, who had resigned under unclear circumstances the previous spring. Iqbal engaged eleven female teachers from Lebanon for the 1948-1949 academic year.[193] By contrast, the number of female

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[186] Abu al-Jubayn, 107.
[187] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha,* September 1948, 178.
[188] Ibid., 99-100.
[189] "Anbaʾ fi Sutur," *Kazima*, October 1948, 137.
[190] "Anbaʾ fi Sutur," *Kazima*, November 1948, 175.
[191] "Ihsaʾiyyat," *al-Biʿtha*, January 1949, 47.
[192] Abu al-Jubayn, 111.
[193] "Anbaʾ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* August 1948, 63.

Egyptian teachers stood at six.[194] It is not clear whether Iqbal al-Habbal was related to ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Habbal and had a hand in engaging him, but this highly probable. That two of the departments' top posts were now in Lebanese hands no doubt threatened Egyptian control. Furthermore, in January 1949, a Palestinian was appointed "Technical Inspector" of the department's newly established printing press.[195]

According to Abu al-Jubayn, the Egyptian Educational Mission also felt threatened by the widespread Kuwaiti sympathy for the Palestinians in the wake of the Nakba.[196] This sentiment is apparent in *Kazima*'s statements, one of which described the appointment of Palestinians as "a national duty."[197] For their part, the Palestinians contributed to local Arab nationalist activity. Some, such as ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Salih and the nationalist Ribhi al-ᶜArif, delivered stirring speeches on Palestine and Arab nationalism at school celebrations.[198] Another teacher, Muhammad al-Zaᶜbalawi, wrote about his experience studying at the AUB in *Kazima*. His article focuses on the role of Qustantin Zuraiq and other professors in instilling their students with Arab national awareness, which the students express through strikes and demonstrations on behalf of various Arab causes.[199]

As might be expected, the Palestinian teachers' nationalist activity also extended to the classroom. Khayri Abu al-Jubayn recalls teaching his students numerous Arab nationalist anthems. One day, the Egyptian Director of Education Taha al-Suwaifi happened to hear him leading his students in song, and requested that he teach these anthems to all primary school students. Abu al-Jubayn agreed, and visited a different

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[194] "Ihsaᵓiyyat," *al-Biᶜtha*, January 1949, 47.
[195] "Anbaᵓ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* January 1949, 252.
[196] Abu al-Jubayn, 138.
[197] "Anbaᵓ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* January 1949, 252; "Anbaᵓ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* September 1948, 101.
[198] Ribhi al-ᶜArif, "al-Insan al-Kamil," *Kazima,* February 1949, 275; al-ᶜArif, "Jaᵓ al-Haq wa-Zahaq al-Batil," *Kazima,* December 1948, 201; ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Salih, "Min Dawaᶜi al-Hijra," *Kazima,* December 1948, 199; Khayri Abu al-Jubayn, Interview by Talal Al-Rashoud, Personal Interview, Kuwait, 26/12/2012.
[199] Muhammad Ibrahim al-Zaᶜbalawi, "al-Hayat fi al-Jamiᶜa al-Amrikiyya," *Kazima,* January 1949, 245-248.

school each day for this purpose.[200] This incident suggests that tension between the Egyptian and Palestinian teachers developed only gradually, and that the Egyptian administration was not immune to the sentiments of Arab brotherhood that prevailed following the Nakba.

One possible explanation for the change in the Egyptian attitude is the cooperation that emerged between Palestinian and local teachers to alter the Egyptian curriculum. In August 1948, *Kazima* announced that the Educational Council had decided, in consultation with the Director of Education, to "comprehensively change" the curriculum. The subjects of history, geography, and science would be specifically targeted.[201] The background behind this decision is not known. However, not long after it was announced, al-Saqqaf published an editorial in *Kazima* in which he argued for "nationalist guidance" in Kuwaiti education. This entailed altering the curriculum and screening textbooks so as to expunge any content antithetical to nationalism (perhaps a veiled reference to the Egyptian textbooks).[202]

Although the Palestinian teachers were engaged after the Educational Council decided to change the curriculum, they came to play a dominant role in implementing this policy. In December, the Educational Council formed a committee to draft the new curriculum. It included three Palestinian teachers, the Lebanese General Inspector, Ahmad al-Saqqaf, and only one Egyptian headmaster. *Kazima*'s report added that the committee was studying the curriculums of various Arab countries, indicating that the abandonment of the Egyptian curriculum was a possibility.[203] Al-Saqqaf's membership also suggests that Arab nationalism would have been emphasized. This was probably more than the Egyptian administration had bargained for when it agreed to alter the curriculum. After all, the use of the Egyptian curriculum in Kuwait was one of the key

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[200] Abu al-Jubayn, 141-147.
[201] "Anbaʾ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* August 1948, 63.
[202] Ahmad al-Saqqaf, "al-Tawjih al-Qawmi fi al-Taʿlim," *Kazima,* October 1948, 123-125.
[203] "Anbaʾ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* December 1948, 213.

sources of its influence. *Kazima* continued to report on the curriculum committee's progress until its last issue in March 1949, when it announced that the curriculums for certain subjects had been completed.[204]

While the fate of the curricular reform scheme is unknown, it was probably derailed by the factional struggle that emerged between the Egyptian and Palestinian teachers and the dismissal of a number of the curriculum committee's members. The details of this struggle are also unclear. Abu al-Jubayn states that the Egyptian press began publishing articles criticizing the Palestinian teachers. The Director of Education al-Suwaifi subsequently recommended, on "technical" grounds, that the Educational Council dismiss more than half the Palestinian teachers. According to Abu al-Jubayn, the council assented, also replacing the General Inspector ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Habbal with an Egyptian. However, the council later fired al-Suwaifi because of "doubts relating to the importation of books and stationary to Kuwait from Egypt."[205] The British Political Resident provides a different account based on a conversation he had with the President of the Educational Department. He states that the "director had to leave because of trouble between him and some Palestinian teachers and… the Kuwait authorities therefore decided to employ no foreign teachers other than Egyptians." The department was also engaging two Egyptian inspectors because "it was much easier for them to control their fellow nationals."[206]

In the academic year 1949-1950, the Egyptian Educational Mission reestablished its dominance within the department with a total of 55 teachers under a new director, Ahmad Darwish Yusuf.[207] The fate of the Palestinian teachers is not clear. Abu al-Jubayn states that only seven Palestinian teachers remained.[208] However, *al-Biᶜtha*

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[204] "Anbaᵓ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* March 1949, 332; "Anbaᵓ fi Sutur," *Kazima,* January 1949, 252.
[205] Abu al-Jubayn, 138, 147.
[206] IOR/R/15/5/198: PR to PA, 3/11/1949.
[207] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Gharaballi, "Hawl al-Taᶜlim al-Hadith fi al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, March 1950, 93; "Ihsaᵓiyyat Taᶜlimiyya," *al-Biᶜtha*, December 1949, 290.
[208] Abu al-Jubayn, 147.

reported the existence of 25 Palestinian teachers in December,[209] and an article by the Secretary of the Educational Department in March 1950 put their number at 28.[210] It is possible that the number of Palestinian teachers was drastically cut at the beginning of the year but that new teachers were then hired over the course of the year. The number of Lebanese female teachers was also reduced from eleven to three.[211]

By the end of the school year, however, the pendulum again swung in the other direction when the Egyptian Educational Mission left Kuwait following a dispute with the Educational Council. It began when the Egyptian teachers protested against having both morning and afternoon shifts, as their colleagues in Egypt and Iraq only taught in the morning. They threatened to resign en masse unless their demand was met. After initial reluctance, the council abolished the afternoon shift. The Egyptians, however, had not anticipated that the council would give in so quickly, and had already sent letters of protest to Egyptian newspapers.[212] One letter published in *al-Musawwar* under the signature of the Egyptian Director of Education in Kuwait complained: "the Kuwaiti authorities go out of their way to harass all members of the Egyptian mission in every conceivable way."[213]

Kuwait's Educational Council published denials of these allegations,[214] and after various investigations the Egyptian director apologized.[215] However, the council decided not to renew the Egyptian teachers' contracts.[216] Its decision was perhaps facilitated by the Egyptian Ministry of Education's ending of subsidies to its teachers in Kuwait at the outset of the school year.[217] Cairo did not lose all its influence in Kuwait, for al-Azhar continued to depute teachers to the religious academy, in addition to

[209] "Ihsaʾiyyat Taʿlimiyya," *al-Biʿtha*, December 1949, 290.
[210] Al-Gharaballi, "Hawl al-Taʿlim al-Hadith," 93.
[211] "Ihsaʾiyyat Taʿlimiyya," *al-Biʿtha*, December 1949, 290.
[212] "PR to Furlonge, 4/5/1950," *Diaries*, Vol. 18, 581; FO 371/82151: Gethin to Hay, 11/4/1950; al-Salih, qtd. in *Tarikh al-Taʿlim fi Dawlat al-Kuwait*, Vol. 2, 140.
[213] "Sarkha min al-Kuwait," *al-Musawwar*, March 24, 1950, 51.
[214] "Ma Hiya al-Haqiqa?" *al-Musawwar*, April 7, 1950, 56.
[215] FO 371/82151: Gethin to Hay, 11/4/1950.
[216] Al-Salih, qtd. in *Tarikh al-Taʿlim fi Dawlat al-Kuwait*, Vol 2., 140.
[217] "Kuwait Diary, 1-15 October 1949," *Diaries,* Vol.18, 421.

qadis.[218] However, the era of absolute Egyptian control over Kuwaiti education had ended.

Kuwaiti Students Abroad, 1943-1950

When ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Shamlan obtained scholarships from the Egyptian government in 1942, he effectively derailed the British scheme of redirecting Kuwait's scholarships to the more secure environment of Bahrain. Following this development, the number of Kuwaiti students sent to Arab countries, particularly Egypt, increased exponentially. Rising oil rents further fuelled this trend, allowing the Kuwaiti government to develop an extensive scholarship program. A much larger proportion of Kuwaitis now participated in the "pilgrimages" that were previously the preserve of a privileged few, and developed profound cultural and political ties to their host societies. When most of these students returned to Kuwait in the early 1950s, they formed the basis for a new social stratum known in the Arab world as the *effendiyya,* and in Kuwait at the time as the *muthaqqafīn.*

In the same year he secured the Egyptian scholarships, al-Shamlan decided to send two of Kuwait's top high-schoolers on scholarship to the AUB, but the university would only accept one pupil as a test case. This pupil was Ahmad al-Khatib.[219] Although he was the only Kuwaiti scholarship student to attend the AUB in the 1940s, his experience stands out as perhaps the most noteworthy and impactful example of Pan-Arab pilgrimage. This is due to the fact that while in Beirut, al-Khatib cofounded what would become the Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN), a prominent regional political group and the backbone of Kuwait's opposition movement in the 1950s and 1960s. After completing his first year of secondary study in Kuwait in 1943, al-Khatib was sent to International College (IC), the AUB's preparatory school. He completed his

[218] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, August 1950, 228-229.
[219] Al-Khatib, 43-45.

secondary education in less than three years and then enrolled in the university's medical faculty.[220] Al-Khatib recalls that studying at the IC and AUB allowed him to interact with Arab students of diverse faiths and political inclinations, an experience that molded his outlook and character. At the same time, he maintained close contact with Kuwaiti students, all of whom were sons of merchants. Some would also become Arab nationalist activists, like ᶜAbd Allah Yusuf al-Ghanim, al-Khatib's classmate at the IC.[221]

It was Khalifa al-Ghunaim, the son of a Kuwaiti merchant family who had just graduated from the AUB, who initiated al-Khatib into the university's Arab nationalist network. Al-Ghunaim had been part of a study circle run by the history professor, Arab nationalist thinker, and former Red Book Group leader Qustantin Zuraiq, and nominated al-Khatib for admission. Together with his close friend, the Palestinian Wadiᶜ Haddad, al-Khatib also joined al-ᶜUrwa al-Wuthqa. Zuraiq had advised this Arab nationalist student society since the 1930s, when the Red Book Group controlled it. Through the society, al-Khatib and Haddad befriended other Arab students, most notably the Palestinian George Habash.[222] Al-Khatib, Haddad, and Habash, all medical students, formed the core of the future MAN.[223]

The Palestinian Nakba precipitated the three students' transition to organized Arab nationalist activism. They volunteered to treat the refugees, and were deeply moved by this experience. Al-Khatib states: "I lived the Nakba in all its tragedy. I saw it with my own eyes and touched it with my hands, and it was inscribed onto my memory forever." He and his comrades subsequently formed a group called al-Shabab al-Qawmi (the Nationalist Youth), and took control of al-ᶜUrwa al-Wuthqa.[224] Al-Khatib was

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[220] Ibid., 50.
[221] Ibid., 55-58, 70-71. Al-Ghanim became a leader of the National Cultural Club, "Shayᵓ min al-Akhbar," *al-Iman,* April 1953, 288.
[222] Al-Khatib, 71, 75-76.
[223] George Habash, *al-Thawriyyun la Yamutun Abadan (*Beirut: al-Saqi, 2009), 35; al-Khatib, 76-77.
[224] Al-Khatib, 76-78.

elected to the student society's board in the 1948-1949 school year, became vice president in 1949-1950, and president in 1950-1951.[225] The Nationalist Youth's activity spread beyond the AUB and Lebanon itself as it forged ties with likeminded organizations across the region. For instance, al-Khatib headed a delegation representing al-ᶜUrwa that visited Iraq with the goal of contacting other young nationalists.[226]

The Nationalist Youth also led demonstrations on behalf of pan-Arab causes. After one such demonstration in which protesters clashed with police, al-Khatib and Haddad became wanted men until Lebanese political groups intervened to have them pardoned. The two returned to the AUB to find that its president had expelled them. However, he was forced to reinstate them after widespread students protests and pressure from local Arab nationalist politicians.[227] In 1951, the Nationalist Youth began building a more structured political organization. Its key members, including al-Khatib, graduated the following year. As they moved to various Arab countries, they established branches of their organization. Later in the decade, the group adopted the name "Movement of Arab Nationalists."[228]

Although al-Khatib's individual experience would have a far-reaching impact on Kuwait's political history, Beirut was a minor pilgrimage site in comparison to Cairo, "the Kaᶜba of Kuwaiti students." As in the case of Kuwaiti students in Iraq in the 1930s, the British authorities were mindful of the political implications of Kuwaitis studying in Egypt. In 1943, Wakelin met the Kuwaiti students upon their arrival to Cairo to ensure they were accommodated in boarding schools where they would be adequately

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[225] Amjad Dhib Ghanma, *Jamᶜiyyat al-ᶜUrwa al-Wuthqa: Nashᵓatuha wa-Nashatatuha* (Beirut: Riyad al-Rayyis, 2002), 171, 183; Kazziha, 19-20.
[226] Al-Khatib, 82-83.
[227] Ibid., 83-85.
[228] Kazziha 21; Habash 37; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* February 1952, 77.

supervised. He also tasked the British Council with keeping an eye on them.[229] Wakelin also proposed that the British Council establish a hostel for scholarship students from the Gulf that would protect their "characters," [230] though this scheme proved impracticable.[231]

When in 1944 the Egyptian authorities declined to accept further Kuwaiti scholarship students because they could not house them, Wakelin proposed that the Kuwaiti government establish its own hostel.[232] Kuwait's Educational Council agreed, but declined the "offer of the British Council to provide an Englishman as Supervisor." Wakelin attributed this position to the Educational Council's "policy of aiming at preserving its independence of action and at the same time reaping what benefit it can from outside sources."[233] The British Council, however, did assist in establishing the hostel, which opened its doors in the fall of 1945.[234] It came to be called Bait al-Kuwait (Kuwait House).

After around a year, the British authorities persuaded the Educational Council to allow the British Council to oversee Bait al-Kuwait's finances. The Political Agent had urged that the Kuwaitis be approached tactfully on this issue, as they "are very jealous of their right to direct their own affairs."[235] This arrangement does not appear to have significantly increased British influence over the hostel's operation. In 1949, Bait al-Kuwait's magazine *al-Biʿtha* responded to queries about the hostel's relationship with the British Council by stating that this was confined to financial management. It emphasized that "pedagogical and cultural direction are of course the concern of the house's administration," which acted upon the direct orders of Kuwait's Educational

[229] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin to PR, 17/8/1943; Wakelin to PR, 15/9/1943; Wakelin to British Council Rep., Middle East, 18/9/1943.
[230] IOR/R/15/5/196: Wakelin to Dundas, 11/4/1943.
[231] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Jackson, 1/9/1944.
[232] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to Jackson, 3/10/1944.
[233] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to PR, 22/3/1945.
[234] IOR/R/15/5/198: Hussey to Hay, 29/7/1946.
[235] IOR/R/15/5/198: Tandy to PR, 28/10/1946.

Council.[236] Shortly afterwards, the British Council discontinued its financial oversight of Bait al-Kuwait. One of its representatives cited "difficulties… in the administration of the money, and how our advice had often resulted in action being taken directly opposed to what we advised."[237]

Rather than appoint an Englishman to direct Bait al-Kuwait as Wakelin suggested, Kuwait's Educational Council appointed its previous scholarship student ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, who had been studying in Cairo since 1939.[238] After attending al-Azhar, Husain enrolled in Cairo's Higher Educational Institute, from which he graduated in 1945.[239] Under his direction, Bait al-Kuwait became a radically different institution to that envisaged by Wakelin. Rather than isolating Kuwaiti students, it immersed them in Egypt's cultural and intellectual life. Husain recalls:

> When it was decided to establish Bait al-Kuwait… the decision-maker's conception of its role and tasks differed in a number of ways from the conception of those who actually oversaw it. The latter did not believe that this institution's purpose was merely to ensure that students graduated from Egyptian academies… In their view, Bait al-Kuwait should undertake greater tasks such as acquainting [the Egyptians] with Kuwait, establishing intellectual ties with Egypt, and ensuring that Egypt fulfilled Kuwait's needs in numerous fields.[240]

Drawing on the connections he had cultivated in Egypt over the previous six years, Husain organized an intensive program of activities for the students. It involved regular seminars, celebrations of religious holidays (including speeches and plays performed by the students), and field trips to museums, factories, newspapers, and other sites.[241]

Hamad al-Rujaib, who commenced his studies in Egypt in 1945 and became

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[236] "Min Huna wa-Hunak," *al-Biᶜtha*, July 1949, 222.
[237] BW 114/11: Report on a Visit to Kuwait, 21/24 May 1950, Dobson.
[238] IOR/R/15/5/197: Wakelin to PR, 22/3/1945.
[239] "Istiqalat al-Mushrif ᶜala al-Biᶜtha," *al-Biᶜtha*, July 1949, 212; IOR/R/15/5/196: Ruler to Hickinbotham, 17/8/1943.
[240] Sulaiman al-ᶜAskari, "Rihla fi ᶜAql Raᵓid al-Tanwir," in *ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain wa-Hulm al-Tanwir al-ᶜArabi,* ed. Sulaiman al-ᶜAskari (Kuwait: Dar Suᶜad al-Sabah, 1995), 29.
[241] See for example: "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, November 1947, 250-251; "Nadwat al-Biᶜtha," *al-Biᶜtha*, April 1947, 90; "Nadwat al-Biᶜtha," *al-Biᶜtha*, Vol. 1, no. 4 (ND), 70; Qasim Mishari, "Fi Dar al-Hilal," *al-Biᶜtha*, Vol. 1, no. 2 (ND), 34; Yusuf Ibrahim "Ihtifal al-Bait bi-l-Mawlid al-Nabawi al-Sharif," *al-Biᶜtha*, Vol. 1, no. 2 (ND), 33; ᶜAli Zakaria "ᶜAm Mada," *al-Biᶜtha*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (ND), 9; "Bait al-Kuwait bi-Misr," *al-Biᶜtha*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (ND), 5.

Husain's assistant in 1947,[242] recalls that the students considered Bait al-Kuwait's seminars to be "sacred" and never missed them.[243] Another of the hostel's students, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Sarᶜawi, states that Bait al-Kuwait was like a school in its own right, adding "we were open to the intellectual and social currents flowing through Egypt at the time." At the hostel's seminars and celebrations, pupils met cultural luminaries such as Zaki Mubarak, Ahmad Amin, Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid, and the Azharite cleric ᶜAbd al-Latif Draz.[244] Through these events, the Kuwaitis forged lasting ties with Egyptians. A notable example is Ahmad al-Shirbasi, who consistently participated in Bait al-Kuwait's activities and wrote for its magazine. A former classmate of Husain at al-Azhar, he was active in the Young Men's Muslim Association and had ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. His close connection to Kuwait led him to teach in the country in the 1952-1953 school year, and he later wrote a book about Kuwait based on his experience.[245]

The activities of Bait al-Kuwait not only allowed its residents to absorb Egyptian influences, but also provided them an avenue for creative expression, which often took on a political coloring. For example, during the hostel's celebration of the Prophet's birthday in February 1948, the students Hamad al-Rujaib and Ahmad al-ᶜAdwani staged a performance of a play they had co-written. Entitled "A Farce Through and Through," it depicted through thinly veiled symbolism the cowardice and corruption of the Arab leaders during the 1948 War. The play proved popular, leading Bait al-Kuwait to print it

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[242] "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, December 1947, 275; al-Rujaib, 148.
[243] Al-Rujaib, 159.
[244] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Sarᶜawi, "Wajhan li-Wajh: ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Sarᶜawi wa-ᶜAbd Allah Ghlum al-Salih," Interview by ᶜAbd Allah Ghlum al-Salih, *al-ᶜArabi*, April 1994, 66-67.
[245] Al-Shirbasi, *Ayyam al-Kuwait*, 339, 529-532, 536-539; Kamil al-Sayyid Shahin, "Mudhakkarat Waᶜiz Asir," *al-Risala,* June 2, 1952, 621-623; For examples of his participation of Bait al-Kuwait's activities see: "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* January 1951, 34; "Musabaqa Adabiyya," *al-Biᶜtha,* May 1950, 181. For examples of his articles see: Ahmad al-Shirbasi, "Kayf Nastafid min al-Kitab?" *al-Biᶜtha,* January 1950, 6; al-Shirbasi, "al-Kuwait fi Mawkib al-Nahda," *al-Biᶜtha,* January 1949, 11; al-Shirbasi, "Wajib al-Shab al-ᶜArabi," *al-Biᶜtha,* May 1948, 77; al-Shirbasi, "Wasiyyat Qaᵓid," *al-Biᶜtha,* Vol. 1, no. 1 (ND), 20.

as a book and sell it through a Kuwaiti bookstore.[246] Bait al-Kuwait's residents also collected donations for Palestine.[247]

The most significant of Bait al-Kuwait's activities was the publication of its monthly magazine *al-Biᶜtha (The Mission)* from late 1946. Though published from Cairo, it is considered the second periodical in Kuwait's history.[248] As ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain stressed in a 1949 editorial, the magazine's main goal was "to present Kuwait to the Arab countries generally and Egypt specifically, knowing that the Arab countries' awareness of one another is the first step towards unity." At the same time, it sought to "carry bursts of Egypt's culture to Kuwait" and encourage journalism and cultural production in the country.[249] *Al-Biᶜtha* published articles by Kuwaiti students, former and current members of the Egyptian Educational Mission to Kuwait, and both Kuwaiti and Egyptian men of letters. It often adopted critical stances towards Kuwaiti affairs, and many articles adopted an Arab nationalist tone, which intensified over time.[250]

Finally, Bait al-Kuwait also played an important role in broadening the Kuwaiti Educational Department's transnational networks, becoming something of an unofficial consulate. According to a 1949 article in *al-Biᶜtha* appraising Bait al-Kuwait's achievements, the hostel "has become recognized by the Egyptian authorities as a center for Kuwait." It served as a source of information on Kuwait, at times correcting inaccurate reports on the shaykhdom in the Egyptian media. Furthermore, it assisted private Kuwaiti individuals visiting Egypt, and carried out tasks for Kuwait government departments.[251] As Director of Bait al-Kuwait, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain also played a

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[246] "Mahzala fi Mahzala," *al-Biᶜtha,* December 1948, 242; "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* February 1948, 36; The play is reproduced in Khalid al-Zaid, *Udabaᵓ al-Kuwait fi Qarnain,* Vol. 2 (Kuwait: al-Rubaiᶜan, 1981), 460-490.
[247] "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* January 1948, 15.
[248] Yahya al-Rubaiᶜan, *al-Tibaᶜa wa-l-Nashr fi al-Kuwait Nashᵓatuha wa-Tatawuruha* (Kuwait: al-Rubaiᶜan, 1995), 23.
[249] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "*al-Biᶜtha* fi ᶜAmain," *al-Biᶜtha*, January 1949, 3; "Bait al-Kuwait fi Thalathat Aᶜwam," *al-Biᶜtha*, January 1949, 5.
[250] ᶜAbd Allah Zakaria al-Ansari, Introduction to *al-Biᶜtha* (Kuwait: CRSK, 1997) 7-15; Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 154.
[251] "Bait al-Kuwait fi Thalathat Aᶜwam," *al-Biᶜtha*, January 1949, 5.

much broader role than that set out in his job description. When he left the post in 1950, *al-Biᶜtha* stated that he "did not confine himself to the limits of Bait al-Kuwait and its affairs but went beyond them to become the technical adviser of the Educational Department."[252] As shall be seen, upon Kuwait's independence in 1961, Bait al-Kuwait was transformed into an embassy, and Husain was appointed ambassador.

It was not only through the controlled environment of Bait al-Kuwait that Kuwaiti students interacted with Egyptian society. The expansion of Kuwait's scholarship program beginning in 1945 coincided with the rise of a violent protest movement in Egypt. Students played a central role in this movement in association with radical, extra-parliamentary forces such as the Muslim Brotherhood, leftist groups, and the fascist-inspired Young Egypt. Student protests, which erupted periodically until the end of the decade, were variously directed at the British, the local authorities, and the situation in Palestine.[253] It was hard for Kuwaiti students to avoid them. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Sarᶜawi recalls an incident that took place shortly after he arrived in Egypt in 1943, when an anti-British demonstration erupted at his secondary school. Though al-Sarᶜawi and his compatriots wanted to join in, they had been warned by the Kuwaiti authorities not to engage in political activity. Seeing the Kuwaiti students' inaction, their Egyptian classmates started pointing at them, chanting: "Down with the cowards! Down with the collaborators!" According to al-Sarᶜawi, this experience left a lasting impact on the Kuwaiti pupils.[254]

Al-Sarᶜawi states that the Kuwaiti students soon overcame their inhibitions towards demonstrations. He recalls participating in many, particularly those of "a nationalist [*qawmī*] character and against the English." On one occasion, the Egyptian protesters mistook a Kuwaiti student for a Sudanese due to his dark complexion. Since

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[252] "ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain," *al-Biᶜtha*, October 1950, 279.
[253] Haggai Erlich, *Students and University in 20th Century Egyptian Politics* (London: Frank Cass, 1989), 139-140, 151-165; James Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 13.
[254] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Sarᶜawi, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, *Rijal fi Tarikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. 3, 277-279.

the cause of Egyptian-Sudanese unity was popular at the time, the Egyptians hoisted the Kuwaiti student on their shoulders. When confronted by the police, the protestors fled, throwing the student to the ground. The police then apprehended him and beat him thoroughly. However, the student remained silent for fear that he would be discovered to be Kuwaiti, and that word of his demonstrating might thus get back to the Kuwaiti authorities.[255]

Brushes with the law did not stop Kuwaiti students from engaging in political activities. Hamad al-Rujaib recalls participating in a protest every week or two, in the process of which he received numerous beatings from the police. Cairo, he states, was "simmering with patriotic and nationalist sentiment," and Palestine "was the main preoccupation of Egyptian and Arab youth."[256] Khalid Khalaf narrowly averted arrest twice, once while demonstrating and another time during a public speech by Young Egypt's leader Ahmad Husain.[257]

In addition to protests, the Kuwaiti students also interacted with organized political groups. Jasim al-Qatami, al-Rujaib, and Khalaf all recall attending lectures by Hasan al-Banna at the Muslim Brotherhood's general headquarters. In Khalaf's case, an Egyptian classmate of his introduced him to al-Banna during a seminar. The Brotherhood leader then asked Khalaf to speak about Kuwait, and praised him after he gave an overview of his country's history. The ensuing conversation lasted until late at night.[258] Al-Qatami also "made contacts with" other Egyptian parties such as Young Egypt.[259] Surprisingly, no Kuwaiti students are known to have joined a political group while in Egypt, and all three who attended al-Banna's lectures later developed Arab nationalist affiliations. Al-Qatami in particular became a leader of the MAN in Kuwait.

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[255] Ibid., 289-291.
[256] Al-Rujaib, 173.
[257] Khalid Khalaf, "Hanin: Kudt U'taqal bi-Sabab Khitab Ahmad Husain 2/2," Interview by Fawzi Jad al-Karim, *al-Nahar*, August 20, 2010, 15.
[258] Jasim al-Qatami, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 95; al-Rujaib, 173; Khalaf, Interview by Jad al-Karim 2/2, 16.
[259] Al-Mdairis, "The Arab Nationalist Movement," 189-190.

By the late 1940s, Egypt's increasingly turbulent politics led the British to pressure the Kuwaiti authorities to refrain from sending scholarship students there.[260] This was tied to British opposition towards the Egyptian control of education in Kuwait, as discussed earlier. However, British leverage over Kuwaiti education was limited at this point. As shall be seen, though Kuwait's scholarships to Egypt did briefly halt in the early 1950s for reasons unrelated to British pressure, they would soon resume. Kuwaiti students would continue their pilgrimages to Cairo unimpeded for years to come.

[260] FO 371/82151: FO Minute, Rose, 25/10/1950; IOR/R/15/5/235: Jakins to Keight, 10/12/1949; IOR/R/15/5/198: PR to Jackson, 21/6/1949.

Chapter Four: Arab Nationalism Resurgent, 1950-1956

The departure of the Egyptian Educational Mission, which had dominated education in Kuwait for almost a decade, allowed for significant change within the department. Between 1950 and 1952, the prominent Arab nationalist ideologue Darwish al-Miqdadi was at the helm of the department, and sought to break once and for all with the Egyptian legacy by introducing a national curriculum based on both Kuwaiti patriotism and Arab nationalism. Although al-Miqdadi had been employed as a result of the Educational Council's Pan-Arab connections, conservative elements within the council opposed his agenda, and sought to rebuild educational ties with Egypt. This resulted in the return of the Egyptian Educational Mission in 1952. A rising trend of Kuwaiti particularism also led to al-Miqdadi's demotion to Assistant Director of Education in the same year. Although al-Miqdadi was unable to implement his curricular reforms during his directorship, he continued to pursue them and reinforce the department's Arab nationalist character for the rest of the decade.

The force that unseated al-Miqdadi was the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn*, a new social stratum that took shape in the early 1950s as a result of the expansion of education. Though many of its members were Arab nationalists, an influential group of *muthaqqafīn* based in the Educational Department advocated a policy of "Kuwait for the Kuwaitis," and sought a Kuwaiti Director of Education. This post was filled by ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain in 1952. Ironically, the department's Arab nationalist character would increase following this shift, partly due to the continuing influence of al-Miqdadi. In 1956, Kuwait's first national curriculum was drafted with the goal of spreading Arab national awareness, marking the return of the "top-down" approach of nationalist inculcation.

The Educational Department Under Darwish al-Miqdadi, 1950-1952

In the summer of 1950, Kuwait's Educational Council decided to hire a

Palestinian educator to occupy the position of Director of Education, vacated following the departure of the Egyptian Educational Mission earlier that year. According to Khayri Abu al-Jubayn, a Palestinian who was then a teacher in Kuwait, the candidates for this position included Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, Ahmad al-Khalifa, and Mahmud al-Hut.[1] All had been high-ranking inspectors within the educational system of the Palestine Mandate.[2] The council's choice, however, fell on the prominent Arab nationalist ideologue Darwish al-Miqdadi, even though he had occupied less senior positions than the other candidates. Al-Miqdadi assumed his duties in Kuwait in July of 1950.[3]

The decision to hire al-Miqdadi must be considered in light of his long career of combining education with Arab nationalist indoctrination and political organization. After graduating from the AUB in 1922, al-Miqdadi returned to Palestine to teach history. In addition to inculcating his pupils with Arab nationalist ideology, he organized student protests and strikes and attempted to form an independent nationalist Scouting association. After repeated clashes with British educational administrators, al-Miqdadi was either fired or resigned on his own accord in 1926.[4]

Shortly afterwards, al-Miqdadi moved to Iraq at the invitation of Satiᶜ al-Husri. Iraq became the main stage for his educational cum political activities, which fit well with the Arab nationalist agenda of the Ministry of Education. In addition to serving as a teacher and headmaster at prestigious institutions in Baghdad,[5] he wrote history textbooks for the ministry. The most important was his aforementioned *History of the Arab Nation*, which contributed to the ideological development of Arab nationalism. Furthermore, al-Miqdadi realized his project of employing Scouting for nationalist

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[1] Abu al-Jubayn, 149-150.
[2] Yaᶜqub al-ᶜUdat, *Min Aᶜlam al-Fikr wa-l-Adab fi Filistin* (Amman: Jamᶜiyyat ᶜUmmal al-Matabiᶜ al-Taᶜawuniyya, 1976), 143-144, 172, 199.
[3] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* August 1950, 228.
[4] Harte, 218-228; Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 153-155.
[5] Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 155, 165-167.

indoctrination and mobilization. As mentioned previously, he cofounded the Arab Rover Society in the early 1930s. Subsequently, he became involved in the government-sponsored Futuwwa youth group after its founding in 1935.[6] During the 1941 Rashid ᶜAli Revolt, he also oversaw Kataᵓib al-Shabab (the Youth Brigades), a paramilitary force of college students that fought the invading British forces.[7]

Al-Miqdadi also played an important role in Iraq's Arab nationalist politics. He cofounded the highly influential Muthanna Club in 1935, and was also active within the Palestine Defense Committee.[8] Most significantly, he was a leading member of the Iraqi branch of the Red Book Group, briefly becoming president of the transnational organization between August 1939 and March 1940 when its headquarters was transferred from Beirut to Baghdad.[9] In the late 1930s, al-Miqdadi and his comrades transformed nationalist organizations such as the Muthanna Club and the Arab Rover Society into fronts for their clandestine movement.[10]

Al-Miqdadi is also frequently remembered for his connection to Nazi Germany. He was a major figure within the radical, fascist-influenced strain of Arab nationalism that became prominent in Iraq in the 1930s. This trend culminated in the 1941 al-Kaylani government, which allied with Germany against Britain. Much of the literature on this strand of Arab nationalism exaggerates its ideological affinity with Nazism due to its reliance on alarmist British reports.[11] It is primarily on the basis of these problematic sources, in addition to Israeli archival material, that al-Miqdadi is portrayed as an enthusiastic Nazi sympathizer.[12] Even with that in mind, al-Miqdadi's Nazi connections were clearly stronger than most contemporary Arab nationalist activists. He pursued a PhD at the University of Berlin between 1936 and 1939, which he could not

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[6] Ibid., 164-165, 168.
[7] Ibid., 168-169.
[8] Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 162-163, 167; Simon, *Iraq Between* 66, 91.
[9] Jeha, 47, 250-253, 265-266.
[10] Ibid., 68, 255, 257.
[11] Wien, 2-4, 7-8, 115.
[12] Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 159-160, 165-167; Simon, *Iraq Between,* 90-91.

complete due to the war. During this time, he was active in Arab student groups sponsored by the Nazi regime.[13] After occupying Iraq in 1941, the British imprisoned al-Miqdadi for four years due to his role in the Rashid ᶜAli Revolt.[14] He returned to Palestine upon his release, but fled to Damascus after the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War, becoming a lecturer at the Syrian University.[15]

There is evidence that political affinity and even past organizational ties between al-Miqdadi and certain members of Kuwait's Educational Council played a key role in his appointment. Abu al-Jubayn attributes the council's decision to the admiration of some of its members for al-Miqdadi's professional background and his "glorious political history."[16] There is no doubt that al-Miqdadi was known to at least some of the councilmen. As detailed in the second chapter, he visited Kuwait in 1933 on a trip organized by the Arab Rover Society, and at least one of his textbooks was used in Kuwaiti schools between 1936 and 1942. Kuwait's Arab nationalist merchants also had ties to the Muthanna Club, which he cofounded.

Ahmad al-Khatib is more specific regarding the connection between al-Miqdadi and the councilmen, arguing that the Palestinian educator was chosen due to his membership of the Red Book Group.[17] Muhammad al-Saddah echoes this view, maintaining that as in the case of al-Saqqaf, it was the former Red Book Group member and councilman Nisf Yusuf al-Nisf who was responsible for employing al-Miqdadi.[18] The memoires of al-Miqdadi's wife Rabiha lend support to this account. She recalls that a delegation from the Kuwaiti Educational Department, headed by al-Nisf, visited Damascus, where al-Miqdadi was teaching. Al-Nisf met with al-Miqdadi multiple times

[13] Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 165-167; Simon, *Iraq Between,* 91.
[14] Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 170.
[15] Ibid., 178.
[16] Abu al-Jubayn, 150.
[17] Al-Khatib, 188-189.
[18] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.

and convinced him to take up the position of Director of Education.[19] Elsewhere, Rabiha emphasizes al-Nisf's support for the Palestinian cause, and states that he became al-Miqdadi's "right hand" in the implementation of pro-Palestinian charitable projects throughout the 1950s.[20] As shall be seen, more former members of the Red Book Group would be employed by the Educational Department following al-Miqdadi's appointment as director, highlighting the importance of this network.

A second member of the Educational Council who could have had a hand in hiring al-Miqdadi was the prominent Arab nationalist ᶜAbd al-Hamid al-Saniᶜ. As has been stated, al-Saniᶜ held that he was one of the first Kuwaitis to make contact with the Muthanna Club in the mid-1930s. He may have come to know al-Miqdadi in this manner. In addition, he published *Kazima* in partnership with the former Red Book Group member Ahmad al-Saqqaf. While other merchants active in nationalist politics in the 1930s later became much more conservative, this does not appear to be the case for al-Nisf and al-Saniᶜ. Al-Khatib recalls that the two men were among the principal merchant supporters of the nationalist opposition in the 1950s.[21] Other councilmen may have also had Arab nationalist leanings, including Yusuf al-Humaiḍi, a former Legislative Council member, and ᶜAbd al-Muhsin al-Khrafi, who was a member of the Educational Council in the 1930s and participated in pro-Palestine activism.[22]

Remarkably, the British did not object to al-Miqdadi's employment despite knowledge of his political history. This can be attributed to several factors, namely: al-Miqdadi's efforts to reassure his erstwhile enemies, British opposition to Egyptian domination of Kuwaiti education, and the British policy of indirectly influencing education in Kuwait. After inquiring about al-Miqdadi, the Political Agent concluded:

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[19] Rabiha al-Miqdadi, 379.
[20] Ibid., 431-432, 481-482.
[21] Al-Khatib, 122-123.
[22] The remaining members of the Educational Council at the time of al-Miqdadi's appointment were Khalid al-Zaid, Sulaiman al-Musallam, Ahmad al-Bahar, Ahmad al-Gharaballi, and ᶜAbd al-Razzaq Razuqi. Minutes of the Educational Council [MEC]: Session [S] 1, 3/10/1950 – S28, 2/9/1951; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* January 1949, 34.

"he does not look an extremely happy choice for this job in Kuwait, although he expressed a warm desire to co-operate with the Agency."[23] Shortly afterwards, the Political Agent reported on a visit paid to him by al-Miqdadi:

> He was… quite frank in saying that one reason for coming was to say that he did not doubt that his past record might have caused us some suspicions... He assured us that in the first place he did not intend to mix up politics in education, and secondly that although in the past he had been anti-British, he now considered that British friendship and support were necessary.[24]

The Political Agent was favourably impressed, adding that he had "no reason to disbelieve these assurances."[25]

In September, the Political Agent reported on another well-received visit by al-Miqdadi to the British Council office in Beirut, and informed the Foreign Office that further research into the new director's political background would be unnecessary.[26] A British Council report in October was even more enthusiastic, praising the new director's "professional integrity" and "long experience of administration in education." It went on to note "the complete change of atmosphere [in the Educational Department] since the appointment of" al-Miqdadi.[27] A British Council official elaborated on this point, stating: "the effect of the new relationship with the Education Department at Kuwait is to cause a considerable increase in demand for advice and materials such as books, films etc."[28]

Al-Miqdadi's successful courtship of the British was facilitated by their common opposition towards Egyptian control of education in Kuwait. As detailed in the previous chapter, the British opposed sending Kuwaiti students to Egypt. As shall be seen, scholarships to Egypt were stopped under al-Miqdadi due to the ongoing dispute between the educational authorities in Kuwait and Cairo and the director's personal bias

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[23] FO/371/82151: PA to British Legation Damascus, 3/7/1950.
[24] FO/371/82151: PA to PR, 11/7/1950.
[25] Ibid.,.
[26] FO/371/82151: PA to FO, 27/9/1950.
[27] BW/114/11: Report, Keight, 15-22 October 1950.
[28] BW/114/11: Craig-Bennett to British Council Middle East, 15/11/1950.

against Egyptian education. When al-Miqdadi was replaced in 1952 and the Egyptian Educational Mission returned, a British official lamented: "we had hoped that Egyptian influence had been virtually eliminated two years ago with the departure of the Egyptian teachers and the appointment of Miqdadi."[29]

Finally, at the time of al-Miqdadi's arrival in Kuwait, the British authorities were committed to a policy of influencing education by indirect means as opposed to direct intervention. As stated in the previous chapter, the departure of the Educational Adviser Wakelin in 1945 ended the more intrusive British efforts to control education in Kuwait. In subsequent years, British oversight was limited to occasional visits by British Council officials from neighboring states. Although Britain's interest in Kuwait's educational affairs increased in the early 1950s as the country's oil industry boomed,[30] the authorities in the Gulf recognized that a new approach was needed.

The director of the British Council Center in Basra, who conducted visits to the Gulf, thus argued in late 1949: "if we are to promote the British way of education in the Persian Gulf, we can only hope to do it through the existing administration for I think that the time has gone when the governments will accept education administrators."[31] The Political Resident approved this approach in 1950, stating: "I fully agree… that constant interference by a permanent adviser would likely be resented." He added: "the Kuwait Government are very jealous of their independence in educational matters and have to be handled very carefully."[32] The appointment of the seemingly friendly al-Miqdadi therefore led a British Council official to remark: "it is particularly satisfactory that the new Director of Education should have been found by the Kuwaitis on their own and yet he is co-operative with us."[33]

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[29] FO/371/98457: Rose to LeQuesne, 24/5/1952.
[30] FO/924/1044: Memorandum, Ricketts to Laver, 30/12/1954.
[31] BW/114/4: Report, Keight, 17-21 November 1949.
[32] FO/371/82151: Hay to Furlonge, 13/3/1950.
[33] BW/114/11: Craig Bennett to BC Middle East, 15/11/1950.

Al-Miqdadi's Educational-Political Philosophy

Whatever al-Miqdadi's motives behind his rapprochement with the British, it did not mean that he had abandoned his Arab nationalist principles. From the offset, he demonstrated independence from the British by representing Kuwait at an Arab League educational conference in Egypt in October 1950. The Political Resident complained that while the Bahraini Director of Education informed the British authorities of his participation, al-Miqdadi did not.[34]

Despite his assurances not to "mix up politics in education," al-Miqdadi also continued to strongly advocate the teaching of Arab nationalism in schools. In early 1953, around six months after his demotion to Assistant Director of Education, al-Miqdadi began writing in *al-Iman*, organ of Kuwait's National Cultural Club. Existing studies of al-Miqdadi's ideology and writings are restricted to the period before the collapse of Iraq's Arab nationalist system of education in 1941.[35] His articles in *al-Iman* provide a rare glimpse into how his ideas developed in the subsequent phase of his career. They reveal that al-Miqdadi still viewed the educational systems of the fascist states as a model when it came to the inculcation of nationalism. At the same time, he sought to incorporate elements of British and American pedagogy, and was critical of preexisting Arab educational systems.

For al-Miqdadi, education is the key to the liberation and advancement of the Arab nation, leading him to proclaim: "the future of the Arabs depends on the awaited Arab school."[36] In his view, centuries of tyrannical rule afflicted Arab society with ignorance, fractiousness, and corruption, and only state education can ensure that the coming generations will be purged of these ills.[37] He states:

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[34] FO/371/82151: British Middle East Office, Cairo to FO, 26/10/1950; Hay to Furlonge, 16/10/1950.
[35] Choueiri, 33-55; Dawn, *al-Miqdadi*; Harte, 218-232; Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 145, 235; Simon, *Iraq Between,* 90-91, 96-99.
[36] Darwish al-Miqdadi, "al-Nizam wa-l-Huriyya fi al-Madrasa," *al-Iman*, November 1953, 565.
[37] Ibid., 565, 574-575.

> For this reason, emerging countries that pursue governance at the hands of a benevolent despot [*mustabid ᶜādil*] expend a great deal of effort in rearing [*tarbīyyat*] the youth… through the schools under their control. In this way, they aim to guarantee their future by creating a generation of youth that believe in their message, as the Nazis did in Germany.

Al-Miqdadi then quotes a member of the Hitler Youth who, even in defeat, proclaims his everlasting loyalty to the Nazi creed.[38] The author goes on to state that from "the awaited Arab school," the Arabs' own "awaited leader [*zaᶜīm*] and benevolent despot" will likely emerge. He will then reform education throughout the Arab nation, thereby "achieving complete revolution, liberating the homeland, and eradicating the ignorance, superstition, poverty, and disease within it."[39]

Al-Miqdadi's belief in the ability of state education to bring about a national renaissance through the forging of a new generation was shared by Satiᶜ al-Husri, who engineered the Iraqi educational system upon this very principle. The two men had a close personal relationship.[40] Al-Husri derived this idea from the German philosophers Herder and Fichte.[41] Al-Miqdadi also appears to have been inspired by the German romantic tradition. He cites the example of Fichte in an article entitled "For Teachers: The School and the Liberation Movement in Germany." Here, he outlines Prussia's use of state education to fight French occupation through the spreading of national awareness. He highlights the role of Fichte and other educators in making the University of Berlin a "center for the resistance movement against Napoleon."[42] Al-Miqdadi's writings in the 1950s thus reveal a great deal of continuity with the German-influenced Arab nationalism of the 1930s.

Al-Miqdadi, however, does not to seek to blindly imitate the Iraqi Arab educational system designed by al-Husri. He maintains that with few exceptions,

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[38] Ibid., 564.
[39] Ibid., 565.
[40] Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 158.
[41] Cleveland, 140.
[42] Darwish al-Miqdadi, "Li-l-Muᶜalimin: al-Madrasa wa-Harakat al-Tahrir bi-Almaniya," *al-Iman*, May 1953, 305-307.

"education has failed in the last thirty years" in the Arab states including Iraq.[43] The main reason behind this is that their educational systems overwhelmingly rely on the rote learning of abstract knowledge.[44] It will be recalled that al-Husri's educational system privileged the teaching of language and history over practical subjects. For al-Miqdadi, practical and technical education is the missing element that allowed Japan to develop into a world power while the Arab world stagnated.[45] It was also a key element in the Nazi system of education, and is at the forefront of recent educational developments in Britain and America.[46]

A second field in which the existing Arab educational systems have failed is what al-Miqdadi terms "spiritual cultivation [*tarbīyya rūḥiyya*]… [which is] the pillar of our personality and nationalism."[47] By this he means not only instruction in nationalist subjects, but also character building. The first deficiency in this regard has been the tendency to treat the teacher as a mere employee, when he is in fact the "only one who can instil the new message in the spirits of the students." The state must accord respect and responsibility to teachers, while at the same time making sure that they become agents of its "revolutionary movement."[48] Students, secondly, must also be free to express themselves and be creative so that they can become men of strong character. The educational system must allow pupils to pursue various tracks and specializations according to their inclinations and abilities, while at the same time imposing discipline and a common national culture.[49]

To al-Miqdadi, the ideal Arab system of education should balance between two pedagogical models. The first is the individualist model practiced in the UK and USA, which is "based upon freedom." The second is the collectivist model exemplified by

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[43] Al-Miqdadi, "al-Nizam," 565.
[44] Ibid., 567.
[45] Darwish al-Miqdadi, "Nahdat al-Yaban," *al-Iman*, February 1953, 82; al-Miqdadi, "al-Nizam," 567.
[46] Al-Miqdadi, "al-Nizam," 575-576.
[47] Ibid., 568.
[48] Ibid., 569.
[49] Ibid., 565-566, 571-573.

communist Russia and fascist Germany and Italy, which prioritizes order. Much of the article is devoted to praising the individualist mode of education for the freedom it accords to both teachers and students, and for the attention it provides to the needs and inclinations of individual pupils.[50] Indeed, al-Miqdadi holds that "the leading men of the Arabs" graduated not from Arab government schools, but from local missionary institutions and academies in Europe and the USA.[51] Nevertheless, the many social ills and external dangers faced by the Arab nation necessitate that "we follow a common policy and believe in a single creed." Only by emulating the collectivist model can Arab educators enforce the required national unity and discipline.[52]

Al-Miqdadi's writings in *al-Iman* also reveal his particular aversion towards the Egyptian system of education. In a 1954 article, he praises the post-revolution educational reforms implemented by the Egyptian Minister of Education Isma^{c}il Qabbani in 1953. The previous educational system, in his view, was built on a colonialist and classist basis, with separate tracks for urban and rural areas. The latter, more advanced track was designed to produce "servile" government clerks, and was overly theoretical and academic in nature.[53] Al-Miqdadi elaborated on this point in a conversation with the British Political Agent following the return of the Egyptian Educational Mission in 1952. The latter reports: "He was very critical of Egyptian methods generally, aiming at cramming facts and passing examinations, not interested in the broader aspects of education, with the health and discipline which should go with it."[54]

A second key failing of the Egyptian curriculum according to al-Miqdadi was its focus on Egypt to the exclusion of the wider Arab nation. In a 1952 educational report,

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[50] Ibid., 570-573, 576.
[51] Ibid., 566-567.
[52] Ibid., 574-575.
[53] Darwish al-Miqdadi, "Nazra Sari^{c}a fi Qawanin al-Ta^{c}lim al-Jadida bi-Misr," *al-Iman*, January 1954, 20-23.
[54] FO/371/98457: PA to PR, 2/6/1952.

he criticizes the 1947 Egyptian secondary school curriculum, then in use in Kuwait, for focusing solely on the history and geography of Egypt and Sudan.[55] Al-Miqdadi's 1954 article praises the new curriculum introduced by Qabbani for placing greater emphasis on Islamic studies and Arabic. However, he adds: "despite the many virtues of the new educational laws, they require further changes to become suitable to the new Arab spirit that has begun to spread in every Arab state." He criticizes in particular the teaching of "Egyptian Society" as a subject in secondary school, insisting that students "must be taught about Arab society in general, and Egyptian society specifically on the basis that it is part of Arab society." Moreover, more attention must be paid to the Palestinian issue and the dangers of Zionism.[56]

Al-Miqdadi's Educational Policies

Al-Miqdadi's positions in *al-Iman* clearly underpinned many of the policies he pursued as Director of Education between 1950 and 1952, and subsequently as Assistant Director until 1961. Al-Miqdadi set out his main goals in an educational report he authored at the end of his tenure. These were the introduction of practical education and the cultivation of an Arab-Islamic identity.[57] During his two years in office, however, his ability to implement his reforms was severely hindered by resistance from the Educational Council. Historically, this body rarely involved itself in pedagogical matters. However, the council appears to have assumed a greater role in this field following the disputes between it and the Egyptian Educational Mission in the late 1940s. As shall be seen, the relationship between al-Miqdadi and the Educational Council would deteriorate considerably after it acquired new members in 1952.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of al-Miqdadi's policy as Director of Education was the ending of Kuwait's exclusive reliance on Egypt for its educational

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[55] Darwish Al-Miqdadi, *Maʿarif al-Kuwait fi ʿAmain 1950-1951, 1951-1952* (Kuwait: 1952), 61-62.
[56] Al-Miqdadi, "Misr," 23-27.
[57] Al-Miqdadi, *Maʿarif al-Kuwait,* 2-6.

needs, instead pursuing partnerships with a broader range of Arab governments and institutions. Between 1950 and 1952, Egypt ceased to be a significant source of educational personnel and technical assistance, while scholarships to Egypt were severely curtailed. Al-Miqdadi also attempted to abandon the Egyptian curriculum, though this would not be completely realized during his tenure. In its place, he sought to create a national curriculum that would simultaneously cultivate Kuwaiti patriotism and Arab nationalism.

Upon assuming his post, al-Miqdadi hired an overwhelmingly Palestinian staff to fill the positions vacated by the Egyptian teachers. In the academic year 1950-1951, the expatriate Arab teachers included 131 Palestinians (71 male and 60 female), 14 Egyptians (11 male and 3 female), 9 Iraqis (male), 6 Syrians (3 male and 3 female), and 2 Lebanese (female).[58] The 11 male Egyptian teachers were the ʿulamaʾ seconded by al-Azhar to Kuwait's religious academy, and were the only officially sponsored teachers to return that year.[59] In the summer of 1950, al-Miqdadi had in fact met with the Egyptian Minister of Education Taha Husain and requested the secondment of further teachers. Husain, however, refused on the basis that the Kuwaiti Educational Department had appointed a non-Egyptian Director of Education without consulting the Egyptian authorities.[60] Al-Miqdadi probably welcomed this response, for in 1952 he confided to the British Political Agent "that he was personally not against Egyptians and would be quite prepared to engage them, in the same way as he took on Syrians, Palestinians and Iraqis; but not such people as the Egyptian Government would send-- they would certainly not be good men."[61]

Palestinians came to occupy the vast majority of senior positions within the Educational Department, including all inspectors and the headmaster of the

[58] "Ihsaʾ ʿAm ʿAn al-Maʿahid wa-l-Madaris wa-l-Hayʾat al-Taʿlimiyya fi al-Kuwait 1950-1951," *al-Biʿtha*, December 1951, 395.
[59] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha,* August 1950, 228.
[60] MEC: S1, 3/10/1950.
[61] FO/371/98457: PA to PR, 2/6/1952.

Mubarakiyya School.[62] An exception was Najlaʾ Abu ʿIz al-Din, the Director of Girls' Schools.[63] A Lebanese Druze, she is said to have been the first woman from an Arab country to attain a PhD, awarded to her by the University of Chicago in 1934.[64] Crucially, she was also a former member of the Red Book Group, and this connection must have had some bearing on her appointment.[65] As a result of her efforts, the first girls' secondary class was established in the academic year 1951-1952, paving the way for the first female scholarships to Egypt in 1955.[66]

The Kuwaiti Educational Department's break with Cairo also allowed al-Miqdadi to seek new regional partners in the fields of technical assistance and scholarships. His policies in this respect were shaped by the desire of the Educational Council to provide a complete secondary education in Kuwait, and to provide scholarships abroad solely for tertiary study. This required the addition of the fifth and final year of secondary study, after which students could progress to the university level. At the same time, it was also necessary to attain regional recognition for the Kuwaiti secondary school diploma, so that graduates would be able to study in Arab universities.

The Educational Council's plans for the development of secondary education in Kuwait predated the arrival of al-Miqdadi. At the beginning of the academic year 1949-1950, the Council attempted to introduce the fifth year, and did not send the fourth year graduates to Egypt. However, it appears that this plan was impracticable, and the students were belatedly enrolled in Egyptian secondary schools.[67] In the fall of 1949, the Council also informed the British that it would cease sending students to Egypt for

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[62] BW/114/11: Notes, Keight, 12-14 November 1951; Report, Keight, 15-22 October 1950; MEC: S27, 14/8/1951; S1, 3/10/1950; "al-Nadi al-Ahli wa-l-Riyada," *al-Iman*, May 1953, 339; Abu al-Jubayn, 152.
[63] MEC: S27, 14/8/1951.
[64] Nazik Sabayard and Nuha Bayyumi, *al-Katibat al-Lubnaniyyat: Bibliughrafia 1850-1950* (Beirut: al-Saqi, 2000), 16; William Ernest Hocking, foreword to *The Arab World: Past, Present, and Future,* by Nejla Izzedin (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), xi.
[65] Jeha, 434.
[66] Fatima Husain, 75-81, 107; MEC: S21, 15/9/1955.
[67] Yaʿqub al-Hamad, "Khawatir fi Shuʾun al-Taʿlim," *al-Biʿtha,* April 1950, 135.

secondary education, and the Bait al-Kuwait hostel would therefore be closed.[68] After al-Miqdadi assumed his post, the department officially inaugurated the fifth year. However, al-Miqdadi reports that the grade was "completed" in the following year.[69] In May 1951, the Council also decreed that Bait al-Kuwait in Cairo would cease functioning as a hostel and would serve only as an administrative office.[70]

At the start of his appointment, the Educational Council tasked al-Miqdadi with obtaining recognition for the Kuwaiti secondary school diploma from Arab governments and universities. The new director first turned to his alma mater, the AUB.[71] After a visit by the university's President Stephen Penrose to Kuwait in February 1951,[72] the AUB recognized the Kuwaiti secondary school diploma and made provisions for the acceptance of Kuwaiti students.[73] In the fall of 1951, the Educational Department sent three secondary school graduates on scholarship to the university.[74] Penrose also recommended that Kuwaiti teachers be enrolled in summer courses at the AUB to improve their standard.[75]

The AUB's recognition of the Kuwaiti secondary school diploma inaugurated a close relationship between the university and Kuwait's Educational Department. In the summer of 1951, the department enrolled the first group of 35 Kuwaiti teachers in a specially designed summer course at the AUB, and promised to increase the salaries of those who successfully completed it.[76] A further twelve teachers were signed up the following summer,[77] in addition to nine graduates of the Mubarakiyya School's teacher

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[68] IOR/R/15/5/235: Jakins to Keight, 10/12/1949; IOR/R/15/5/198: PR to PA, 3/11/1949.
[69] Al-Miqdadi, *Maᶜarif al-Kuwait,* 59; MEC: S1, 3/10/1950; Yaᶜqub al-Hamad, "Khawatir fi Shuʾun al-Taᶜlim," *al-Biᶜtha,* October 1950, 272.
[70] MEC: S21, 1/5/1951.
[71] MEC: S1, 3/10/1950.
[72] Stephen Penrose, Report, February 1951, Stephen B. L. Penrose Jr. Papers, Whitman College, Walla Walla Washington.
[73] Al-Miqdadi, *Maᶜarif al-Kuwait,* 60; MEC: S18, 20/2/1951.
[74] Al-Miqdadi, *Maᶜarif al-Kuwait,* 71; MEC: S25, 13/6/1951; Unnumbered Sessions, 2/6 and 11/6, 1951.
[75] MEC: S20, 14/3/1951.
[76] MEC: S26, 23/7/1951; Unnumbered Sessions, 28/5, 29/5, and 30/5, 1951; S20, 14/4/1951; al-Miqdadi, *Maᶜarif al-Kuwait,* 67-68.
[77] MEC: S29, 17/4/1952.

training classes.[78] The AUB would continue to organize summer courses for Kuwaiti teachers throughout the 1950s.[79]

The second institution to recognize the Kuwaiti secondary school diploma was the American University in Cairo (AUC) in January 1952.[80] The man responsible for this was ᶜAbd al-Qadir al-Nuᶜmani, a Lebanese academic who became director of Bait al-Kuwait in October 1950, and was also a faculty member at the AUC.[81] At the same time, al-Nuᶜmani also reopened talks with the Egyptian Ministry of Education with the goal of obtaining its recognition of the Kuwaiti diploma.[82] As shall be seen below, this proved to be a very important development.

Al-Miqdadi next sought recognition from the Iraqi Ministry of Education, another institution with which he had longstanding ties. In April 1952, he travelled to Baghdad to request the secondment of a committee of experts to oversee the final examinations for the fourth and fifth secondary years. The ministry complied, despatching the requested committee to Kuwait in May of that year.[83] At its head was Salim al-Naᶜimi,[84] a former comrade of al-Miqdadi in both the Red Book Group and the Arab Rover Society. He had even participated with al-Miqdadi in the Rovers' 1933 trip to Kuwait.[85] Al-Miqdadi may have used his nationalist political connections to facilitate cooperation with the Iraqi authorities. As part of this arrangement, Iraq's Ministry of Education recognized the Kuwaiti secondary school diploma at the start of the academic year 1952-1953.[86]

In the same year, the first Kuwaiti scholarship students were sent to Iraq since 1938. Two students went to the Baghdad Teacher's College, and seven others who

[78] Al-Miqdadi, *Maᶜarif al-Kuwait,* 68.
[79] MEC: S44, 29/5/1957.
[80] MEC: S12, 14/1/1952; S26, 23/7/1951.
[81] "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* November and December 1950, 336; "Fi Idarat al-Biᶜtha," *al-Biᶜtha,* October 1950, 283; MEC: S1, 3/10/1950.
[82] MEC: S26, 23/7/1951.
[83] MEC: S35, 22/5/1952; S31, 3/5/1952; S30, 24/4/1952.
[84] MEC: S35, 22/5/1952.
[85] Jeha, 254, 447; Fadil Husain, 260, 282.
[86] "Al-Kuwait fi Shahr," *al-Raᵓid*, Oct 1952, 88.

failed the fifth year examinations repeated the year in Iraqi schools. The Iraqi government also offered six scholarships to Kuwaiti students, though it is not clear if they were accepted.[87] The resurgence of Iraqi influence over Kuwaiti education was, however, cut short by the return of the Egyptian Educational Mission. The latter took over the supervision of Kuwait's secondary school examinations in the 1952-1953 school year.[88] Egyptian influence ensured that educational cooperation between Kuwait and Iraq remained limited throughout the decade, particularly as bitter geopolitical rivalry emerged between Cairo and Baghdad from the mid-1950s.[89]

It was also under al-Miqdadi that the Kuwaiti Educational Department offered its first scholarships to Great Britain. The first group of Kuwaiti scholarship students enrolled in British secondary schools and universities towards the end of 1950.[90] By the summer of 1952, they numbered 28.[91] Along with their pressure to refrain from sending scholarships to Egypt, the British also appear to have pushed Kuwait's educational authorities to send scholarships to the UK. When approached by the Political Agent in late 1949, an unnamed "prominent member" of the Educational Council promised to divert scholarships from Egypt to the UK after the introduction of the fifth year of secondary education in Kuwait.[92] British pressure was not the only factor behind these scholarships. In 1950, the British-educated Palestinian headmaster of the Mubarakiyya School also recommended that secondary school graduates be sent to the UK.[93] Furthermore, in early 1951, the KOC started providing an annual grant to the department for scholarships to the UK.[94]

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[87] "Maᶜ Biᶜthat al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* May 1953, 290; BW/114/4: PG/WRK 1952/53 No. 2, Keight, 31/1/1953; "Al-Kuwait fi Shahr," *al-Raʾid*, October 1952, 88.
[88] MEC: S60, 5/3/1953.
[89] Jankowski, 65.
[90] "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* November-December 1950, 336; MEC: S11, 19/12/1950.
[91] Al-Miqdadi, *Maᶜarif al-Kuwait,* 71.
[92] IOR/R/15/5/235: Jakins to Keight, 10/12/1949.
[93] MEC: S11, 19/12/1950.
[94] MEC: S13, 2/1/1951.

Although the Educational Department was prepared to send students to the UK, it was wary of accepting further British educational assistance. It has already been stated that the British Council assisted al-Miqdadi in obtaining textbooks and other material when he was first appointed. The British Council's center in Beirut also continued to help the department recruit teachers – a practice dating to the 1940s – and helped organize the AUB summer courses for Kuwaiti teachers.[95] However, the Educational Council rejected any measures that would allow the British to assert control over education. It thus rejected a proposal by the British government to place Kuwaiti scholarships to the UK under its supervision.[96] Instead, it relied on the ruler's personal representative in London, who cooperated with a private educational agency.[97] The British Council, supported by the British Foreign Office, also took advantage of the departure of the Egyptian Educational Mission to push for the employment of British teachers and an inspector of English.[98] However, a British Council official lamented that the department was "adamant in its refusal to employ… British teachers,"[99] and the Political Resident added that they "show little readiness to accept" British assistance.[100]

Along with his efforts to broaden the regional ties of Kuwait's Educational Department, al-Miqdadi also sought to end its dependence on the Egyptian curriculum that he so opposed. To replace it, he sought to create an independent Kuwaiti curriculum that would simultaneously emphasize local identity and Arab national belonging. This is in line with his "flexible" ideological stance, which holds local patriotism and Arab nationalism "to be complementary rather than mutually

[95] BW/114/7: Highwood to Jardine, 27/10/1953; FO/1016/218: Keight, [1952]; BW/114/11: Report, Dobson, 21-24 May 1950; Al-Saddah, 12.
[96] FO/371/98458: Keight to PR, 27/10/1952.
[97] FO/924/1044: Memorandum, Ricketts to Laver, 30/12/1954.
[98] FO/371/98458: Keight to PR, 13/6/1952; BW/114/11: Notes, Keight, 4-9 February 1952; FO/371/82151: FO Minute, Rose, 25/10/1950; PA to PR, 1/7/1950; FO Minute, Dore, 10/3/1950.
[99] FO/371/98458: Keight to PR, 27/10/1952.
[100] FO/371/98458: Hay to Rose, 28/8/1952.

exclusive."[101] However, he faced opposition from the Educational Council, which hoped to resume educational ties with Egypt and was therefore reluctant to abandon the Egyptian curriculum. Despite the council's resistance, al-Miqdadi was able to achieve a limited degree of curricular reform, as a result of which instruction in Arab nationalism was reintroduced to Kuwaiti schools for the first time since the Iraqi curriculum was abandoned in 1943.

Al-Miqdadi first proposed changing the curriculum at several Educational Council meetings in December 1950. He argued that the curricula and textbooks of certain subjects were "weak" and required replacing. The council was at first reluctant, but later agreed that all curricula must be "strengthened" and inadequate textbooks replaced.[102] In a meeting in early January 1951, al-Miqdadi made a more ambitious proposal, aided by the Palestinian inspector Hasan al-Dabbagh. The latter presented a detailed argument for the creation of "a strong domestic curriculum suited to the local environment" to replace that of Egypt. He also revealed that the department had already begun to gradually alter the Egyptian curriculum by adding supplementary material. This time, a number of councilmen defended the Egyptian curriculum. They included Khalid al-Zaid, who declared:

> It is my view that the Egyptian curriculum must be maintained, albeit with the strengthening of its weak points… due to our cultural relations with Egypt. Moreover, we must emulate this largest and most sophisticated of Arab and Muslim nations, which has for long bestowed its services upon all Arab countries in the field of education.[103]

This statement suggests that Egypt's cultural prestige was a factor influencing the council's attitude. The council decreed that the Egyptian curriculum be preserved as Kuwait's "official, fixed" curriculum, and that only textbooks approved by Egypt's

[101] Choueiri, 33.
[102] MEC: S12, 26/12/1950; S11, 19/12/1950; S10, 5/12/1950.
[103] MEC: S13, 3/1/1951.

Ministry of Education could be used.[104] Al-Miqdadi later attempted to convince the council to reconsider its decision but was unsuccessful.[105]

In the face of the council's obstinacy, al-Miqdadi sought to effect the changes he desired while nominally adhering to the Egyptian curriculum. He introduced a host of curricular reforms that took effect in the academic year 1951-1952.[106] His 1952 report set out the rationale behind them. He argued that at the primary level, variations in practice across schools and grades meant that the Egyptian curriculum was already not strictly implemented in Kuwait. Furthermore, "Kuwait, like any other Arab country, has particular circumstances which justify the introduction of certain alterations that do not effect the core of the curriculum." He added that the new primary school curriculum, which was printed and distributed to all schools, "is not, strictly speaking, a new curriculum. Rather, it merely modifies and strengthens the previous curriculum."[107] Regarding the secondary level, al-Miqdadi maintained that the 1947 Egyptian curriculum was to be followed, albeit "with some modification, expansion, and strengthening of certain areas according to the [local] circumstances and environment."[108]

Although al-Miqdadi does not explicitly mention nationalist indoctrination as a goal of his curricular reform scheme, his 1952 report elsewhere lists the fostering of "national awareness" as an objective of education.[109] It was the first department document to do so. The report also states that the alterations to the Egyptian primary school curriculum specifically targeted the subjects of history and geography. Though it does not detail the changes made, the report argues that these subjects "must differ across [Arab] states," suggesting that more focus was placed on Kuwait. Furthermore,

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[104] Ibid.
[105] MEC: S14, 16/1/1951.
[106] Al-Miqdadi, *Maʿarif al-Kuwait,* 26-28, 47.
[107] Ibid., 47.
[108] Ibid., 60.
[109] Ibid., 41, 54.

unlike the Egyptian curriculum, the subjects of history, geography, and Islamic studies were included in the final examinations for the primary school diploma, thus giving them greater weight.[110]

It appears that in practice, the modified primary school curriculum drew heavily on the curriculum of Mandatory Palestine. The Palestinian teacher Khayri Abu al-Jubayn recalls that the Egyptian curriculum was largely restricted to the secondary level. On the primary level, he states, the curriculum was almost wholly Palestinian.[111] Muhammad al-Saddah, who was a primary school teacher at the time, similarly recollects that the curriculum was in practice Palestinian, with only a few Egyptian textbooks.[112]

Though al-Miqdadi's alterations to the secondary level curriculum were less comprehensive, their Arab nationalist dimensions are more readily apparent. The most extensive changes were made to the subjects of history and geography, which previously only covered Egypt and Sudan. In the history curriculum for the first secondary year, the study of ancient Egypt was supplemented with Mesopotamian, Greek, and Roman history. The curriculum for the third year, which previously dealt only with Egypt in the Islamic period, was broadened to include the other Arab countries, Islamic Spain, the Crusades, and an introduction to medieval Europe. Finally, "the reawakening of [Arab] national awareness, the patriotic movements, and political developments in the Arab east from the mid-nineteenth century" were added to the study of modern Egyptian history in the fourth year. In the geography curriculum, the study of the Nile Valley was dropped in favor of "the countries of the Arab east, especially Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen."[113]

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[110] Ibid., 47-48.
[111] Abu al-Jubayn, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[112] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[113] Al-Miqdadi, *Maᶜarif al-Kuwait*, 61.

In January 1952, new elections produced an Educational Council that was more hostile towards al-Miqdadi and his attempts to dilute the Egyptian curriculum. The political background behind this position will be discussed in detail below. In its first month, the council raised concerns over why a particular Arabic grammar textbook not approved by Egypt's Ministry of Education was being used in Kuwaiti schools. It formed a "monitoring committee to investigate the issue of textbooks and observe administrative proceedings" within the department.[114]

The development that ultimately put an end to al-Miqdadi's new curriculum was the resumption of educational cooperation with Cairo in the summer of 1952. As has been stated, the director of Bait al-Kuwait approached Egypt's Ministry of Education in the summer of 1951 regarding its recognition of the Kuwaiti secondary school diploma. In December of that year, the ministry informed him that it was prepared to dispatch a committee of specialists to assess Kuwait's educational system and determine whether its diploma could be recognized. The Kuwaiti Educational Council readily agreed,[115] and a committee comprised of Egyptian educators Muhammad ʿAli Rida and Hafiz Ahmad Hamdi arrived in Kuwait in May 1952. During their three-week visit, they compiled a report assessing the extent to which the Kuwaiti system of education complied with that of Egypt.[116]

The Rida-Hamdi report focused to a large extent on the local curriculum, highlighting its deviations from that of Egypt. It pointed out shortcomings in numerous subjects, particularly on the primary level, and also highlighted the omission of civic education (*tarbīyya waṭanīyya*). Given this subject's exclusively Egyptian focus, it is little wonder that al-Miqdadi left it out.[117] The report even questioned the Educational

[114] MEC: S14, 23/1/1952.
[115] MEC: S17, 11/2/1952; S9, 17/12/1951.
[116] Rida and Hamdi, 8, 36.
[117] Salmoni, 1107.

Department's decision to allow the fourth year secondary school class to graduate because it had not completed the curriculum.[118]

The Rida-Hamdi report focused much of its criticism on al-Miqdadi's history and geography curriculums. Although it stated that their "general Arab character and attention to Kuwait" are warranted, it deemed that the subject matter was not chosen based on careful study. It also held the history curriculum to be overly ambitious. Moreover, the report pointed to the "peculiar mix" of Egyptian and non-Egyptian textbooks, describing some as outdated.[119] Rida and Hamdi thus effectively questioned al-Miqdadi's expertise in his field of specialization. The report concluded by recommending that the curriculum be reconsidered and "provided with a solid foundation." This would be achieved through establishing committees of Egyptian experts to ensure that each subject conformed to Egyptian standards. At the same time, they would strive to accommodate the "circumstances of the Kuwaiti environment," particularly in the subjects of history, geography, civic education, and Islamic studies.[120]

Although this scheme did not materialize, the Rida-Hamdi report nevertheless heralded the end of al-Miqdadi's first attempt to create an Arab nationalist Kuwaiti curriculum. As shall be seen, with the return of the Egyptian Mission, Egypt's curriculum would once again be closely followed. This did not stop al-Miqdadi from continuing to pursue an Arab nationalist curriculum for Kuwait, and in 1954 he would again pursue curricular reform, this time more successfully. In addition, his continued influence would be apparent in the role played by former Red Book Group members in the department's activities. Before addressing the circumstances behind al-Miqdadi's

[118] Ibid., 13-16, 23-27.
[119] Ibid., 15.
[120] Ibid., 33.

demotion, it is first necessary to examine the background of the educated young Kuwaitis who sought to replace him.

The Rise of Kuwait's *Muthaqqafīn*:

In the 1950s, the political, cultural, and administrative fields in Kuwait were radically transformed by the emergence of a new social stratum, known elsewhere in the Arab world as the *effendiyya.* In Kuwait, no single term was used to designate this group, which was composed of those who had received a modern, Western-style education. Of the various terms used by these individuals to describe themselves, perhaps the most common was "*muthaqqafīn*" ("cultured" or "educated").[121] Although the existing historical literature mentions the "intelligentsia" in the context of 1950s Kuwaiti politics, it largely fails to investigate the group's origins and internal makeup.[122] Moreover, the more specialized studies of Arab nationalism in Kuwait generally fail to discuss the social underpinnings of the political groups upon which they focus.[123]

By virtually ignoring the role of the *muthaqqafīn* in Kuwait's political development during the 1950s and 1960s, the existing literature reinforces an exaggerated conception of Gulf exceptionalism. The Gulf is thus portrayed as untouched by the socio-political dynamics experienced not only in the Arab region, where the rise of the *effendiyya* was a central development in twentieth century history, but the world at large, where the intelligentsia formed the backbone of nationalist movements. It is therefore necessary to discuss the development, composition, and political orientation of the *muthaqqafīn* in Kuwait before examining their impact within

[121] See for example: "Khawatir," *al-Taliᶜa*, August 1962; Hamad al-ᶜIsa, "Hadha Huwa al-Tariq," *al-Biᶜtha*, April 1954, 402; *al-Biᶜtha*, October 1953, 494; Yaᶜqub al-Hamad, "Madha Nurid min Nadi al-Muᶜalimin?" *al-Biᶜtha*, February 1952, 67; Yusuf al-Sayyid Hashim, "Limadha Fashalat al-Sahafa?" *al-Biᶜtha*, December 1951, 376; ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "Rida al-Nas," *al-Biᶜtha*, May 1950, 163; "Hadith al-Muharir," *al-Biᶜtha*, April 1950, 154; Muhammad al-Fawzan, "al-Kuwait Bayn Jilayn," *al-Biᶜtha,* January 1949; al-Khatib, 163; al-Rujaib, 191. Schumann op. cit. adopts the same term in reference to Syria.

[122] Zahlan, *The Making,* 41; S. Smith, 70; Crystal, 81-83.

[123] See the works of Al-Mdairis.

the educational sector.

In the spring of 1950, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain, one of Kuwait's pioneering and preeminent *muthaqqafīn*, wrote: "a conscious segment [*fiʾa wāʿīyya*] has taken shape in Kuwait, possessing a significant degree of education."[124] It was around this time that the *muthaqqafīn* began to coalesce into a discrete social stratum within Kuwaiti society, the product of the expansion of Kuwait's scholarship program, local education, and the state bureaucracy in the 1940s and 1950s. The stratum was composed primarily of the middle class, though the sons of merchants remained an important constituent. The *muthaqqafīn* were also overwhelmingly young men, lending a generational aspect to their corporate identity. They generally shared a modernistic outlook and a belief in their role as the vanguard of social and political reform in a largely traditional, illiterate society. However, they adhered to various political ideologies, of which Arab nationalism would become by far the most prevalent by the mid-1950s. As a result of their prominent position within the state bureaucracy and their control over the clubs and the press, the *muthaqqafīn* were able to exercise an inordinate degree of influence over Kuwait's political development in the 1950s and early 1960s.

A 1962 article in the MAN mouthpiece *al-Taliʿa* gives a more detailed picture of which groups made up the *muthaqqafīn.* The article takes stock of the proportion of the population that can be deemed "*wāʿī"* (politically aware or conscious). At the head of this segment were the graduates of Arab and Western universities. Next came the Kuwaiti teachers and secondary school students. The largest component, finally, were "the informed youth working in government ministries and private businesses."[125] A number of developments in the 1940s and 1950s led to the growth of each of these constituent elements of the *muthaqqafīn*.

In the early 1950s, increasing numbers of Kuwaiti university graduates who had

[124] ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain, "al-Nahda al-Murtaqaba," *al-Biʿtha,* March 1950, 79.
[125] "Khawatir," *al-Taliʿa*, 12.

been sent to Egypt in the previous decade began to return home. *Al-Biʿtha* magazine reported the return of eight such graduates to Kuwait in 1950.[126] Their numbers increased as the Kuwaiti scholarship program expanded. The first Kuwaiti census held in 1957 recorded 51 native university graduates out of a total population of 107246 Kuwaiti citizens.[127] Though representing a small proportion of the *muthaqqafīn*, university graduates served as a leading element, occupying prominent positions within the bureaucracy and serving as leaders of clubs and political groups and editors of periodicals.[128] Multiple examples will be provided below.

Most scholarship students sent to Egypt in the 1940s returned to Kuwait after attaining their secondary school diplomas and did not pursue tertiary study.[129] These diplomas also carried great prestige in Kuwait at the time, as evinced by the creation of the Graduates' Club in 1953, which restricted its membership to those who had completed secondary school.[130] After Kuwait's secondary school began awarding diplomas in 1952, the number of secondary school graduates increased, reaching 197 by the time of the 1957 census.[131]

A second development that contributed to the emergence of the *muthaqqafīn* as a social stratum was the rapid expansion of education in Kuwait in the 1940s and 1950s, which increased the number of both secondary school students and local teachers. Speaking of the region as a whole, Eppel argues: "the most important, central, and active portion of the *effendiyya* was that of the students in secondary schools and institutions of higher education."[132] As higher classes were added and the demand for education grew, the number of secondary school students in Kuwait rose from 55 in the

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[126] "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha,* October 1950, 284; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha,* August 1950, 243; "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha,* January 1950, 27.
[127] *Tiʿdad Sukkan al-Kuwait li-Sanat 1957* (Kuwait: Daʾirat al-Shuʾun al-Itimaʿiyya, 1957), 225.
[128] ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain, 131.
[129] *Al-Taqrir al-Sanawi li-l-ʿAm al-Dirasi 1960-1961* (Kuwait: Daʾirat al-Maʿarif), 146.
[130] *Al-Qanun al-Asasi li-Nadi al-Khirrijin bi-l-Kuwait* (Kuwait: al-Matbaʿa al-ʿAsriyya, 1953), 4.
[131] *Tiʿdad 1957,* 225.
[132] Eppel, *Iraq,* 230.

academic year 1946-1947,[133] to 163 in 1950-1951,[134] 307 in 1952-1953,[135] and 670 in 1955-1956.[136]

The expansion of education in Kuwait also resulted in a need for more teachers, which the Educational Department addressed through the creation of teacher-training classes beginning in the academic year 1947-1948.[137] Between 1948-1949 and 1952-1953, the number of male Kuwaiti teachers increased from 88 to 121.[138] The total number of Kuwaiti teachers in fact peaked either in 1952-1953 or 1953-1954, dwindling over the rest of the decade as educated Kuwaitis sought more profitable avenues of employment.[139] It must be noted that the majority of Kuwaiti teachers during the early 1950s had qualifications below the secondary level, including a few years of secondary study and primary school diplomas.[140]

A third development that contributed to the growth of the *muthaqqafīn* was the expansion of the state bureaucracy in the period between the mid-1940s and mid-1950s, when oil revenues rose dramatically, leading to increases in immigration, trade, and urban development. New departments formed during this period include Public Works in 1947,[141] Awqaf in 1949,[142] Electricity in 1951,[143] Press and Publishing in 1954, Social Affairs in 1955,[144] and Telegraph and Telephones in 1956.[145] A primary goal of Kuwait's scholarship program was to create native bureaucrats and technicians, and from at least 1948, scholarship regulations required that graduates work in government

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[133] "Min Sijjilat Maᶜarif al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* April 1947, 89.
[134] "Ihsaʾiyya ᶜAma li-l-Madaris wa-Muᶜalimiha wa-Tulabiha," *al-Biᶜtha,* November-December 1950, 340.
[135] "Ihsaʾiyyat," *al-Biᶜtha,* December 1952, 551.
[136] *Al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, 11.
[137] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, November 1947, 247.
[138] *Al-Taqrir al-Sanawi li-l-ᶜAm al-Dirasi 1952-1953* (Kuwait: Daʾirat al-Maᶜarif), 12; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* November 1948, 228.
[139] Statistics for the academic year 1953-1954 were not located. By the academic year 1954-1955, the number of male Kuwaiti teachers had decreased to 108. FO/371/109936: Pelly to Burrows, 18/11/1954.
[140] Al-Miqdadi, *Maᶜarif al-Kuwait,* 45.
[141] Al-Badr Vol. 2 and 3, 38.
[142] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, February 1949, 59.
[143] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1951, 267.
[144] See chapter five.
[145] "Burrows to Riches, 16/2/1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 91.

jobs for a specified period.[146] The government also offered high salaries to attract educated Kuwaitis away from the more profitable private sector.[147]

Many *muthaqqafīn* quickly rose to prominent positions within the bureaucracy. The British anthropologist Peter Lienhardt, who visited Kuwait in the early 1950s, observed that a dual system of authority had emerged within the government departments.

> As well as having a shaikh as its head (*ra'is*), each department had a chief administrator, a civil servant entitled the director (*mudir*). These civil servants were middle-class Kuwaitis who thus, after the shaikhs, formed a further layer in the management of affairs.[148]

The bureaucracy also employed much larger numbers of Kuwaitis with lower levels of education, who would have comprised the rank and file of the *muthaqqafīn.* It is difficult to estimate their number as the 1957 census provides no information on government employment. However, it lists 1077 primary school graduates within the native population.[149] It also must be noted that the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* probably differed from the *effendiyya* elsewhere in the region in that a large proportion of them worked in private trade, a time-honored occupation in Kuwait made all the more profitable by the oil boom.[150] The aforementioned article in *al-Taliᶜa* places the number of "informed youth" in both the public and private sector at around 10,000 in 1962.[151]

As the above analysis suggests, the *muthaqqafīn* represented a very small proportion of Kuwaiti society throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. The 1962 article in *al-Taliᶜa* estimated that the "conscious" segment of society amounted to no more than 10% of the total native population.[152] Their proportion was certainly much smaller in

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[146] "Jalsat Majlis al-Maᶜarif al-30, 24/4/1961," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, May 7, 1961, 17; ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Gharaballi, "Hawl al-Taᶜlim al-Hadith fi al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* March 1950, 93; "Fi Bayt al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* December 1948, 255.
[147] Lienhardt, 51-53; BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1955-1956, 4.
[148] Lienhardt, 57.
[149] *Tiᶜdad 1957,* 225.
[150] Lienhardt, 51-53.
[151] "Khawatir," *al-Taliᶜa*, 12.
[152] Ibid.

the early 1950s. It was precisely this position as an elite minority that gave the *muthaqqafīn* their identity and status within the largely traditional Kuwaiti society. As Eppel argues, the *effendiyya* were the product of the stark inequalities in education and modernization that characterized Arab societies at particular points in their development.[153] Kuwait's 1957 census reports a 47% illiteracy rate among citizens.[154]

Other characteristics such as class composition and generational profile also reinforced the corporate identity of the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn*. The same developments that led to the appearance of the stratum, namely: scholarships, the growth of domestic education, and the expansion of the bureaucracy, enabled an unprecedented degree of social mobility in Kuwait. Al-Naqeeb argues that from the early 1950s, state welfare policies and "increased bureaucratization" began to produce a politically assertive, white-collar middle class that challenged the traditional social and political order.[155] Its members were drawn primarily from the middling classes within the traditional economy, which included minor merchants, mullas, clerks, shopkeepers, and artisans.[156] Whereas the proto-*effendiyya* of the 1930s and 1940s were largely sons of merchants, the middle class dominated the new stratum of *muthaqqafīn*. Writing in 1958, the British Council's representative in Kuwait attributed the country's Arab nationalist activism to the middle class "of professional men, officers, school-teachers, artisans, clerks and merchants all relying on their acquired skills." He also noted the political prominence of this class in Kuwait in comparison to other Gulf states.[157]

The largely middle class profile of the *muthaqqafīn* is also apparent in the backgrounds of prominent members of this stratum. The example par excellence of the upwardly mobile *muthaqqaf* is the aforementioned Ahmad al-Khatib, who cofounded the MAN as a scholarship student at the AUB and became Kuwait's first native medical

[153] Eppel, "Note," 538.
[154] *Tiᶜdad 1957,* 225.
[155] Al-Naqeeb, "Social Stratification," 148-149.
[156] Ibid., 134, 186, 204-205.
[157] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1957-1958, 2, 4.

doctor.[158] Al-Khatib hailed from the lower class neighbourhood of al-Dihla in Kuwait Town. His father had worked for the Al Sabah as an armed retainer, but lost his modest job after being maimed in battle, plunging his family into poverty.[159] The Kuwaiti teacher and MAN activist Muhammad al-Saddah also recalls growing up in poverty. His father took to pearl diving after the collapse of his family's trade, and later became a leather craftsman.[160] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, who headed Bait al-Kuwait in Cairo in the 1940s and the Educational Department in the 1950s, provides another example. He was the son of a mulla and minor merchant, and derived from the *hwila*, migrants from Iran who were largely excluded from the political and economic establishment in Kuwait.[161]

Although the social profile of the *muthaqqafīn* was primarily middle class, the sons of merchant families remained prominent within the stratum. Sons of merchants studied alongside those of a middle class background in Kuwait and abroad, and thus came to share a common culture and outlook. Some abandoned trade for positions within the bureaucracy. As Wien argues in the case of the Iraqi "Young Effendiyya," the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* were "a group of young men with a common 'social experience,' refering to culture, education, dress, and behavior." "Interaction and experience" were thus more important than class dynamics in the formation of the stratum.[162]

One of the most prominent mercantile *muthaqqafīn* was Jasim al-Qatami, who was sent on scholarship to Cairo in 1947, where he joined the police academy. After completing a one year course at Scotland Yard, he returned to Kuwait in 1954 as the country's first trained police officer,[163] and was appointed Director of Police. When

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[158] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* February 1952, 77.
[159] Al-Khatib, 27-33.
[160] Al-Saddah, 8.
[161] KOC/100485: Who's Who in Kuwait.
[162] Wien, 15.
[163] "Maᶜ Biᶜthat al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* February 1954, 147; "al-Awaᵓil: Awwal Dabit Bulis Kuwaiti," *al-Raᵓid*, June 1953, 241-244; "Maᶜ Biᶜthat al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* May 1953, 290; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* June 1947, 122.

popular protests erupted during the 1956 Suez Crisis, al-Qatami resigned his post rather than obey orders to suppress the demonstrations.[164] He subsequently became a key leader of the MAN. Jasim's elder brother Muhammad had been a high-ranking officer in the police force created by the Legislative Council, and was killed in a scuffle with the ruler's retainers in 1939 (see chapter two).[165] Jasim al-Qatami thus illustrates how *muthaqqafīn* of a merchant class background often provided a direct connection to the previous merchant-led nationalist movement.

One trait that almost all *muthaqqafīn* shared in common was their youth, such that it virtually became a defining characteristic of the stratum alongside Western-style education. Once again, a parallel can be drawn with the *effendiyya* in 1930s Iraq. Wien holds that "the experience of being the first age cohort enjoying state supervised nationalist education created a sense of being elite and distinction from the elders and their Ottoman background among the Young Effendiyya."[166] "Youth" thus became "a distinguished social category," and generational conflict became a central feature of Iraqi politics during this period.[167]

A similar dynamic emerged in Kuwait in the early 1950s, when modern education set an increasing proportion of the youth apart from their traditionally educated elders. Youth was equated with education, progressiveness, and modernity in many of the writings of the *muthaqqafīn*. A Kuwaiti scholarship student in Egypt, Khalid al-Khrafi, thus affirms that only the youth can reform Kuwait by introducing Western civilization and obliterating those traditions standing in the way of progress.[168] The Kuwaiti teacher Muhammad al-Fawzan speaks of a struggle between the old and the young over the importance of education and the will to reform. He states: "the old generation considers luck to be an important factor in success, while the new generation

[164] KOC/106962: Local Situation Report, 8-13 November 1956.
[165] IOR/L/P&S/12/3758: Intelligence Summary, 1-15 March 1939; al-Hatim, 170.
[166] Wien, 34.
[167] Ibid., 14-16.
[168] Khalid al-Khrafi, "Yaqazat al-Shabab," *al-Biʿtha,* March 1949, 130.

believes that the enlightened and cultured (*muthaqqaf*) man forces luck to submit to and serve him."[169] These generational divisions often manifested themselves politically. During the Suez Crisis, the KOC reported that Arab nationalist activists were intimidating merchants into boycotting British and French companies. It observed that, "in many cases, the young nationalists are the sons of the self-same merchants who are being intimidated."[170]

The stark disparity in education between the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* and wider society led them to develop an "elite-consciousness" that transcended political divisions within the stratum, as in the case of the Syrian *muthaqqafīn* described by Schumann.[171] Their writings reveal that they saw themselves as a vanguard whose education entitled them to political leadership and made them responsible for their society's welfare. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain thus proclaims:

> The people by nature fear all that is new, and it is difficult for them to change what they are familiar with. The burden therefore falls solely upon the enlightened class of the population that works to transform the nation, unperturbed by the anger and hostility they may be met with, for the masses do not know what is good for them.[172]

The Secretary of the Educational Department ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Gharaballi presents a similar argument. In his view, Kuwait has long been mired in *rajᶜīyya* (backwardness or reaction), and only the educated can comprehend and resolve their country's problems. Moreover, they are obliged to spread their knowledge and culture to the rest of society.[173]

The *muthaqqafīn*'s "elite-consciousness" motivated them to seek a greater role in politics and administration, a development that inevitably led to conflict with the established elites, particularly the ruling family. This accords with Smith's

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[169] Al-Fawzan, "al-Kuwait Bayn Jilayn," 25; al-Fawzan is mentioned in al-Khrafi, 884, 898, 1168.
[170] KOC/106962: Local Situation Report, 8-13 November 1956.
[171] Schumann, 26.
[172] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "Rida al-Nas," *al-Biᶜtha,* May 1950, 163.
[173] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Gharaballi, "Ghayatuna min al-Taᶜlim," *al-Biᶜtha*, April 1950, 136; al-Gharaballi, "al-Nahda al-ᶜIlmiyya fi al-Kuwait," January 1949, 18-19.

aforementioned theory of the intelligentsia, which holds that this stratum's meritocratic and rationalist ethos leads to a "conflict of cultures" with traditional elites. When elite resistance thwarts the intelligentsia's aspirations for upward mobility, the stratum becomes "radicalized" and espouses nationalist ideology.[174] A 1957 KOC report suggests that a similar dynamic was at play in Kuwait. It states:

> Many Kuwaiti students who are studying abroad… criticise the shaikhs for monopolising the highest offices… They do not hide their intention to try to take over these bigger offices in due course. As one of them said – "When one of us graduates in engineering, social affairs, etc., he will expect to hold an office commensurate with his education. The people in place will oppose us. There might be a fight. We will be ready for it."[175]

As early as 1950, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain articulated this sentiment in an *al-Biᶜtha* editorial:

> [Some] see in these scholarships and energetic young men a threat to their influence and positions. Thus, rather than looking for those who are more capable and qualified than themselves, they try to maintain the status quo. However, they fail to see that in so doing, they try to stop time from passing.[176]

The Kuwaiti headmaster and MAN activist ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain put it more forcefully in the nationalist *al-Iman*,[177] stating: "We want to banish the illiterate and semi-literate from the departments."[178] As shall be seen, the *muthaqqafīn*'s bid for political leadership became clear with the emergence of a popular protest movement in 1956.

Markers & Practices of Modernity

The Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* further emphasized the distinction between themselves and the traditional masses by adopting conspicuous markers and practices associated with modernity. In the early 1950s, many followed the example of the *effendiyya* in Egypt, the Levant, and Iraq by adopting Western dress. The anthropologist

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[174] Smith, *Revival*, 117-121.
[175] KOC/106845: Local Situation Report, 1-15 August 1957.
[176] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "Ahlam," *al-Biᶜtha*, August 1950, 208.
[177] Al-Khrafi, 1083-1084.
[178] ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain, "Nahw al-Khayr," *al-Iman*, February 1955, 606.

Lienhardt observed that "the European fashion seemed to be spreading because students returning for holidays would often continue to wear the suits they had been wearing abroad." At first, those who wore suits "also wore Arab head-dress since it was undignified to appear bareheaded in public."[179] Fatima Husain, one of the first Kuwaiti women to study in Egypt on scholarship in 1955, similarly recalls that returning graduates continued to wear suits. This practice, she states, extended "to all those who worked in education, followed by the doctors and engineers, until trousers became the marker of the educated and the graduate."[180]

For Kuwait's *muthaqqafīn*, Western attire was not a fashion statement but an integral component of modern culture. In December 1951, Darwish al-Miqdadi convinced the reluctant Educational Council to introduce Western school uniforms. The department provided all students with two suits free of charge, which they had to wear "in keeping with the spirit of progress and modernization."[181] In May 1952, the council also approved the awarding of a clothing allowance to every Kuwaiti teacher willing to regularly wear a Western suit.[182] Pressure by the *muthaqqafīn* may have encouraged this decision. Ahmad al-ᶜAdwani, who had become a teacher after returning from Egypt,[183] authored an editorial in 1950 attacking the conservatism that prevented Kuwaitis from adopting modern practices. These included the donning of Western clothes, which "are worn by all civilized nations… [and] are one of the desirable features of modern civilization (*madanīyya*)." He demanded that the Educational Department impose this attire on both students and teachers.[184]

Al-Raᵓid, organ of the Teachers' Club, celebrated the department's decision to introduce the uniforms. A 1952 article criticized the disheveled appearance of students

[179] Lienhardt, 49.
[180] Fatima Husain, 153.
[181] MEC: S4, 3/12/1951; S1, 3/10/1950.
[182] MEC: S31, 3/5/1952; S30, 24/4/1952.
[183] Al-Khrafi, 796.
[184] Ahmad al-ᶜAdwani, "Taqalid," *al-Baᶜth*, August 1950, 3-4.

in traditional dress, arguing that Western clothing "is not specific to any nation. It is one of the conventions of modern civilization and is more conducive to vitality and work than Eastern robes."[185] In the same year, a scholarship student who graduated from Egypt similarly extolled the aesthetic merits and health benefits of Western dress, and demanded that teachers be made to wear suits as well.[186] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain recalls that when he took charge of the Educational Department in 1952, he insisted on wearing suits in order to set an example. Even after Western attire fell out of fashion among educated Kuwaiti men, Husain continued to oppose the traditional *dishdāsha*. He provided cultural legitimation for his modernism by arguing that trousers represent the original historic costume of the Arabs. At the same time, suits are more practical than the *dishdāsha* and "better for work life," and the whole world is bound to adopt them.[187]

It appears that in the early 1950s, the wearing of Western suits became an elite status symbol that was aspired to by educated Kuwaitis from various backgrounds. In May of 1952, the parents of students in the tribal village of al-Fuhaihil petitioned the Educational Council to apply the new school uniform regulations introduced in Kuwait City to their school.[188] A similar incident occurred in 1954, when the student union at Kuwait's Religious Academy requested that their uniform be changed to "the European suit (*al-badla al-ifrinjīyya*)."[189]

Some Kuwaiti graduates who returned home in the early 1950s went even further in their emulation of social practices in the more modern Arab societies. They continued to speak in the dialects of the countries in which they had studied, which for the vast majority would have been Egypt. Judging from the criticism of this practice in

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[185] "Mazahir," *al-Raʾid*, May 1952, 238-239.
[186] Yaᶜqub al-Hamad, "Rajaʾ," *al-Raʾid*, June 1952, 444-445.
[187] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "Hadith maᶜ Wazir al-Dawla Yabdaʾ bi-Mushkilat Lubnan wa-Yantahi bi-l-Dishdasha wa-l-Bantalun," Interview, *Majallat al-Nahda*, January 1976; ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "Hadith maᶜ ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain Wazir al-Dawla al-Kuwaiti," Interview, *al-Anwar,* August 12, 1971.
[188] MEC: S36, 26/5/1952.
[189] MEC: S9, 29/12/1954.

al-Biᶜtha, it does not appear to have been the norm.[190] Nevertheless, it is indicative of the extent to which the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* associated modernity and progressiveness with the cultures of the more developed Arab countries.

The Politics of the Muthaqqafīn

Despite their minority status, the *muthaqqafīn* exerted a disproportionately large influence within Kuwaiti politics through their control of the clubs and the press, and their dominance over certain segments of the bureaucracy. This was one of the key factors behind the salience of Arab nationalist ideas in Kuwait on both the popular and official levels in the 1950s. However, it must be noted that as in Smith's theory of the intelligentsia, the *muthaqqafīn* did not act alone in forming the nationalist movement but were reliant upon support from other social groups.[191] These included petty traders, oil workers, the merchant class, Arab expatriates, and even certain shaykhs of the ruling family.[192] The role of some of these groups, particularly the last three, will be discussed below.

In the early 1950s, the establishment of a variety of political movements heralded the arrival of the *muthaqqafīn* onto the political scene. Kuwaiti graduates of Arab schools and universities established the principal factions. Their return coincided with the introduction of liberalizing measures by Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Salim al-Sabah, who succeeded Ahmad al-Jabir in February of 1950.[193] This led to a mushrooming of sporting and cultural clubs, many of which served as fronts for underground political groups. In addition, most clubs published journals that, along with a few independent publications, comprised the first national press.[194]

At around the same time, there occurred an influx of politically active Arab

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[190] "Yudayiquni," *al-Biᶜtha,* January-February 1953, 123; Marzuq al-Ghunaim, "Qawmiyyun," *al-Biᶜtha,* May 1952, 218.
[191] Smith, *Revival,* 128-132.
[192] Al-Khatib, 111, 172-183; Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 212, 295-307.
[193] "PR to Furlonge, 6/3/1950," *Diaries,* Vol. 18, 548.
[194] Al-Khatib, 168-172.

migrants, particularly from Palestine. In the wake of the 1948 defeat, many Palestinians joined radical transnational political movements. At first, the communists and the Muslim Brotherhood were the most popular, though Arab nationalist groups became increasingly dominant starting in the 1950s. Although Fatah, which espoused a more particularistic Palestinian identity, was established in Kuwait in 1957 or 1959, Arab nationalist groups such as the MAN and the Baᶜth Party remained dominant among Palestinians until the mid to late 1960s.[195]

Cordial relations and cultural affinity with the local population enabled Palestinian expatriates to play an active role in the new political activism. The majority of the Palestinians who migrated to Kuwait in the late 1940s and early 1950s were *effendiyya*,[196] and thus had much in common with their Kuwaiti counterparts in terms of culture and outlook. Moreover, "the 1950s and 1960s were a honeymoon period for the Kuwaitis and the Palestinians, as both communities were swept up in the Arab nationalist fervor of the time."[197] It was only later, especially in the 1970s, that a "politics of exclusion" crystallized in Kuwait, separating the privileged citizenry from the disenfranchised migrant population.[198] This cordial relationship allowed Palestinians and other Arab expatriates to participate in both the underground political groups and the clubs and press.[199]

Although Arab nationalism would become the dominant political ideology among the *muthaqqafīn* by the mid-1950s, at the start of the decade it faced stiff competition from other ideological movements. Between 1952 and 1953, numerous articles in *al-Biᶜtha* commented on the intense factionalism and rivalry between the

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[195] Laurie Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 26, 66, 70-77, 127-128.
[196] Shafeeq Ghabra, *Palestinians in Kuwait: The Family and the Politics of Survival* (Boulder and London: Westview, 1987), 33-34, 41.
[197] Brand, 124.
[198] Longva, *Walls Built on Sand,* 43-44.
[199] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud; Abu al-Jubayn, Interview by Al-Rashoud.

various clubs, political groupings, and cliques of educated Kuwaiti youth.[200] The Egyptian cleric Ahmad al-Shirbasi, who taught at Kuwait's Religious Academy in 1952-1953, identified four political currents in Kuwait: the Islamists, the "humanistic current," the Arab nationalists, and "the current of regional interest."[201] The latter two were the most influential within the educational field.

The primary representative of the Islamist current was the Muslim Brotherhood. Kuwaiti merchants with ties to Iraq and Egypt established a local branch of the organization in the late 1940s,[202] and formed Jamᶜiyyat al-Irshad al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Guidance Society) in May 1952.[203] The group had a strong presence in the schools, and included Arab expatriate teachers.[204] It must be noted that prior to the 1954 split between Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the division between Islamists and Arab nationalists was not as pronounced as it would later become.[205]

The second political movement listed by al-Shirbasi is "the humanistic current," which he describes as those who oppose national and sectarian divisions, and advocate common human values and the principle of citizenship.[206] Al-Shirbasi is probably referring to the communists, as their internationalist position was a key factor separating them from the Arab nationalists. Communist oil workers from Iraq and Iran began organizing in Kuwait in the late 1940s and early 1950s, influencing local workers. The communists' popularity among the working class rather than the *muthaqqafīn* set them

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[200] Khalid al-Hamad, "Hadith al-Nawadi", *al-Biᶜtha*, October 1953, 526; ᶜAbd al-Razzaq al-Basir, "Muhawara maᶜ Sadiq", *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1953, 445; Muhammad Musaᶜad al-Salih, "Mutafariqat", *al-Biᶜtha*, March 1953, 125; ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Sarᶜawi, "Kalimat ᶜAbira", *al-Biᶜtha*, March 1953, 83; "Hadhihi al-ᶜAsabiyya," *al-Biᶜtha*, December 1952, 499; ᶜAbd Allah Zakaria, "Ila Ayna Nahnu Saᵓirun?," *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1952, 327; Marzuq al-Ghunaim, "Qawmiyyun, al-Mazaj al-Raqiq, al-Fadila fi al-Mizan," *al-Biᶜtha,* May 1952, 218.

[201] Al-Shirbasi, *Ayyam al-Kuwait,* 324.

[202] Ali Al-Zumai, "The Intellectual and Historical Development of the Islamic Movement in Kuwait 1950-1981" (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 1988), 69-71.

[203] "Jamᶜiyyat al-Irshad al-Islamiyya," *al-Raᵓid*, October 1952, 559.

[204] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement" 162-163; Al-Mdairis, *Malamih Awaliyya,* 41-43; Al-Zumai, 70-73, 79-80.

[205] Al-Zumai, 86; al-Khatib, 174-175.

[206] Al-Shirbasi, *Ayyam al-Kuwait*, 325.

apart from the other movements. Rather than operating through clubs, they organized themselves into small, underground political groups.[207] However, there were communist teachers, mostly Arab expatriates, who propagated their ideology in the schools.[208]

The early 1950s also saw the reemergence of an organized Arab nationalist movement in Kuwait for the first time since the late 1930s. This time, however, it was the *muthaqqafīn* rather than the merchants who led it. The first of the new generation of nationalist groups to appear in Kuwait was the Baᶜth Party in 1951. Its early cells were made up exclusively of Arab expatriates. The party faced difficulty attracting support from Kuwaitis and therefore remained marginal throughout the decade. It was the Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN) that became by far the most dominant Arab nationalist faction in Kuwait in the 1950s and 1960s.[209] One reason for the group's popularity was its charismatic Kuwaiti cofounder, Ahmad al-Khatib, who returned in early 1952[210] to establish what were possibly the first MAN cells outside of Lebanon.[211]

Al-Khatib and his associates first pursued their activities through the cultural committee of al-Ahli Sports Club.[212] In the spring of 1952, al-Khatib met with a number of independent Arab nationalists to form a new cultural club. The majority of the latter worked in the educational sector: the Kuwaiti headmaster ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain, in whose school the meeting was held, the South Arabian (by now naturalized) headmaster Ahmad al-Saqqaf, and the newly elected member of the Educational Council ᶜAbd Allah ᶜAli al-Saniᶜ. The meeting resulted in the establishment of al-Nadi al-Thaqafi al-Qawmi (the National Cultural Club [NCC]) in April of 1952.[213] Although the NCC included independents and Baᶜthists, it was firmly controlled by the MAN. After the Baᶜthists tried and failed to take control of the club, they established their own Nadi al-

[207] Al-Mdairis, *al-Tawajuhat al-Marksiyya,* 9-22; Zahlan, *The Making,* 41.
[208] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud; al-Saqqaf, *Tatawwur,* 33; Al-Mdairis, *Malamih Awaliyya,* 42.
[209] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 155-157; Hashim, 296.
[210] "Huna al-Kuwait", *al-Biᶜtha*, February 1952, 77.
[211] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 152.
[212] Al-Khatib, 125.
[213] Al-Saddah, 14-15; Hashim, 289; MEC: S28, 15/4/1952.

Ittihad al-ᶜArabi (Arab Union Club) in 1957.[214] As shall be discussed below, MAN control later extended to the Graduates' and Teachers' Clubs.

From the offset, the Arab nationalists formed one of the most prominent of the *muthaqqafīn* factions, and their presence in the educational sector was therefore significant. As detailed in the previous chapter, teachers such as al-Saqqaf, ᶜAbd Allah Husain, and Muhammad al-Saddah had been actively promoting nationalist ideology since the 1940s. They now conducted their activism through organized channels: Husain and al-Saddah became prominent members of the MAN,[215] while al-Saqqaf served as a leader of the NCC and editor of its publications (without joining any party).[216] According to al-Saddah, the number of Kuwaiti teachers who joined the MAN in the 1950s did not exceed ten or twelve, though many more sympathized with the movement.[217]

Palestinian teachers also played a vital role in this educational activism. In the early 1950s, the vast majority of Arab nationalist Palestinian teachers lacked party affiliation.[218] A notable example was Ribhi al-ᶜArif, who had been active in the 1940s and now participated in the clubs and wrote articles on Arab nationalism for the NCC's *al-Iman*.[219] As the MAN was founded at a relatively late date and its members were mostly university students, it took some time for Palestinian members of the group to reach Kuwait.[220] The most prominent was Ghassan Kanafani, who taught in Kuwait between 1955 and 1960.[221] Palestinians and other Arab expatriates were well integrated into the nationalist movement. Unlike other clubs, the NCC granted full membership to

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[214] "Al-Ittihad al-Riyadi al-Kuwaiti, Waqaᵓiᶜ al-Jalsa 15, 15/9/1957," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, September 22, 1957, 7; Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 155.
[215] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 152.
[216] Al-Saqqaf, Interview by Milaiji, 271; al-Saqqaf, *Tatawwur,* 61-62.
[217] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[218] Muhammad Abu Ghazala, Interview by Talal Al-Rashoud, Personal Interview, Kuwait, June 6, 2013; al-Musa, Interview by Al-Rashoud; Abu al-Jubayn, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[219] Ribhi al-ᶜArif, "Shuhadaᵓ al-ᶜUruba," *al-Iman*, February 1955, 617; al-ᶜArif, "Fi al-Qawmiyya al-ᶜArabiyya: Risala li-l-Ustadh Nadim al-Bitar," *al-Iman*, January 1954, 145; al-ᶜArif, "Muhadarat fi Nushuᵓ al-Fikra al-Qawmiyya," *al-Iman*, May 1953, 349; Abu al-Jubayn, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[220] Abu al-Jubayn, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[221] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 182; al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.

non-Kuwaiti Arabs who had resided in Kuwait for two years.[222] Kanafani and other Palestinians served on the club's board.[223] The Arab expatriates introduced new forms of political activism and developed the local press.[224] Kanafani, for example, edited the Graduate Club's weekly *al-Fajr* (The Dawn) after it came under MAN control.[225]

The final political movement identified by al-Shirbasi was that devoted to "regional interest [*al-maslaḥa al-iqlīmīyya*]," which focused on Kuwaiti affairs, and maintained that "the wealth of Kuwait belongs to its sons."[226] Another contemporary observer dubbed this movement "Kuwait for the Kuwaitis,"[227] while al-Khatib describes it in his memoires as a "regionalist current opposed to the [Arab] nationalist orientation."[228] Most accounts hold the primary representatives of this movement to be a group of graduates who returned from Egypt and established the Teachers' Club in early 1951.[229] Notable among them were Hamad al-Rujaib, Ahmad al-ᶜAdwani, and Fahad al-Duwairi, who served on the club's board and edited its monthly journal *al-Raʾid* (The Pioneer) from March 1952.[230]

It is not known by which term these proponents of Kuwaiti particularism referred to themselves. The term *iqlīmīyya*, or regionalism, was coined by Arab nationalists "to denote a reprehensible feeling of loyalty toward a part rather than toward the whole."[231] Hamad al-Rujaib repudiates this label in his memoires:

> There were those who said we were regionalists and only liked Kuwaitis… There was a group among us [i.e. educated Kuwaiti youth] who fought us and made this claim. We were members of the Teachers' Club, and they used to say that the members of the club hate non-Kuwaitis. They went to the Palestinians and spread these lies about us in order to fight us. However, they were exposed

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[222] MEC: S28, 15 April 1952.
[223] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 153.
[224] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[225] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 182.
[226] Al-Shirbasi, 324-325.
[227] Muhammad Musaᶜid al-Salih, "al-Ittihad aw al-Hawiyya," *al-Biᶜtha*, March 1954, 254.
[228] Al-Khatib, 188.
[229] MEC: S14, 16 January 1951; al-Shirbasi, 307.
[230] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 179-180; Hashim, 294; Abu al-Jubayn, 155; al-Khatib, 189.
[231] Sylvia Haim, *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1962), 39.

> later on, and it came to be known that we serve and help all those who serve this country with dedication.[232]

It must be taken into account that al-Rujaib penned his memoires decades after the events in question, and that he, like most members of this group, would become a staunch Nasserist by the mid-1950s. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of the so-called regionalists referring to themselves as such.

What is clear is that the regionalist movement was not based on a refined notion of Kuwaiti nationalism; rather, it was largely a reaction to mass immigration and the disadvantaged position of Kuwaiti employees in the Educational Department. The Kuwaiti regionalists made no attempt to articulate an ideology of territorial nationalism to rival Arab nationalism as occurred in other Arab states.[233] *Al-Raʾid* makes frequent references to the Kuwaiti *waṭan* (homeland) and *waṭanīyya* (patriotism),[234] which in contrast to "*iqlīmīyya*" denote an acceptable form of subnational loyalty within the Arab nationalist lexicon.[235] The magazine at times argues that the prioritization of Kuwait's interests does not conflict with its Arab identity,[236] while a few articles even adopt explicitly Arab nationalist rhetoric.[237] Furthermore, although occasional references to Kuwaiti traditions occur,[238] the regionalists' writings are thoroughly modernist in tone. This is apparent in their attitude towards the emancipation of women,[239] and Western dress as discussed above.

The main bone of contention between the regionalists and the Arab nationalists appears to have been immigration, which was a salient topic in *al-Raʾid*. Indeed, this is

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[232] Al-Rujaib, 189.
[233] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[234] See for example: "Kalimat al-Tahrir," *al-Raʾid,* January 1954, 443; "Haflat Takrim," *al-Raʾid,* June 1952, 474; "Kalimat al-Tahrir," *al-Raʾid,* March 1952, 1.
[235] Gershoni, 8.
[236] "Min al-Raʾid ila Qariʾiha al-Karim," *al-Raʾid,* March 1953, 1046; "Kalimat al-Tahrir," *al-Raʾid,* March 1952, 3.
[237] "Al-ᶜArab fi Tariq al-Ittihad," *al-Raʾid,* February 1953, 891; Hamad al-Rujaib, "al-ᶜArab Umma Wahida," *al-Raʾid,* February 1953, 841.
[238] Fahad al-Duwairi, "al-Daman al-Ijtimaᶜi fi al-Kuwait," *al-Raʾid,* March 1952, 4-12.
[239] Munira Hamdi, "Nur Jadid Yanbathiq," *al-Raʾid,* January 1954, 480; Khalid al-Gharaballi, "Jinayat Ab," *al-Raʾid,* May 1952, 391; Fahad al-Duwairi, "Insana Baʾisa," *al-Biᶜtha*, April 1950, 158.

true of most Kuwaiti publications in the early 1950s, which were flooded with articles on the dangers of the growing migrant population. The Arab nationalists directed their hostility towards immigration from Iran specifically. They portrayed it as a threat to the Arab identity of Kuwait and even as a conspiracy by the Iranian government to take over the Arab states of the Gulf. At the same time, they welcomed immigration from Arab countries.[240] By contrast, no distinction between non-Arab and Arab immigration is evident in the articles of *al-Raʾid*.[241] The regionalists also emphasized that the migrants' presence in Kuwait was temporary, and that Kuwaitis should take over their positions. Fahad al-Duwairi thus argued that the Bedouin of Kuwait should be sedentarized and employed as an alternative to migrant labor.[242]

A second, related argument advanced by the regionalists was that Kuwaiti employees in the bureaucracy were disadvantaged vis-à-vis foreigners. They charged that locals were not allowed to advance to higher positions, which were reserved for non-Kuwaitis. The latter enjoyed all the perquisites of these jobs including high salaries and free housing.[243] The regionalists asserted that not only were Kuwaitis more deserving of their country's bounties, but they were also better able to comprehend and solve its problems, and more committed to its welfare.[244]

This attitude appears to have originated among Kuwaiti teachers specifically, who had always played second fiddle to expatriate Arabs. This perception of subordination among Kuwaiti teachers coincided with a marked increase in their

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[240] See for example: "Nidaʾ," *al-Biʿtha*, March 1954, 227; ʿAbd al-Latif al-Maniʿ, "Nidaʾ," *al-Biʿtha*, January 1954, 55; Ahmad al-Khatib, "Nahnu wa-Iran," *al-Iman*, May 1953, 302; ʿAbd Allah al-Rifaʿi, "Ihsaʾ al-Sukkan," *al-Iman*, April 1953, 238; "Ahadith al-Suq," *al-Iman*, January 1953, 29; ʿAbd Allah Ahmad Husain, "al-Kuwait Burj al-ʿArab," *al-Biʿtha*, June 1952, 290; "Ittaqu Allah Ayuha al-Muwatinun," *al-Biʿtha*, June 1952, 300.

[241] "Kalimat al-Tahrir," *al-Raʾid,* June 1953, 233-234; "Hadith al-Nas," *al-Raʾid,* November and December 1952, 645; Nuri al-Suʿudi, "Qanun al-Jinsiyya wa-l-Hijra," *al-Raʾid,* May 1952, 377-378; "Barid al-Raʾid," May 1952, *al-Raʾid,* 361; "Hadith al-Nas," *al-Raʾid,* October 1952, 340.

[242] Al-Duwairi, "al-Daman al-Ijtimaʿi," 11; "Hadith al-Nas," *al-Raʾid,* November and December 1952, 645.

[243] "Kalimat al-Tahrir," *al-Raʾid,* June 1953, 233-234; "Khudhu al-Hikma min Afwah al-Sufahaʾ," *al-Raʾid,* October 1952, 504-505.

[244] "Haflat Takrim," *al-Raʾid,* June 1952, 4474; al-Duwairi, "al-Daman al-Ijtimaʿi," 18.

numbers between the late 1940s and early 1950s as stated earlier. Soon after the Egyptian Educational Mission departed, a number of Kuwaitis were appointed to high-level positions within the Educational Department. A group of local teachers were made headmasters of primary schools at the outset of the academic year 1950-1951.[245] At around the same time, ʿIsa al-Hamad became supervisor of physical education and Scouting. He was a fresh graduate of an Egyptian university who had previously worked as a teacher in Kuwait.[246] Al-Hamad was promoted to inspector the following year, becoming the first Kuwaiti to occupy this position.[247] Furthermore, prior to the academic year 1951-1952, the Educational Council ruled that Kuwaitis should be given priority when appointing headmasters to newly established schools.[248]

Rather than placating the Kuwaiti teachers, these appointments appear to have ignited a current of activism among them. Shortly after their promotion, the Kuwaiti headmasters successfully petitioned the Educational Council to raise the salaries of local teachers.[249] Despite periodic raises,[250] the local press continued to criticize these salaries for comparing badly with other government jobs.[251] In January 1951, the same group of Kuwaiti headmasters requested permission from the Educational Council to establish the Teachers' Club. The Council assented, and approved a further request for monetary support in April.[252] The founders of the Teachers' Club included the Arab nationalists al-Saqqaf, ʿAbd Allah Husain, and al-Saddah, but they soon shifted to the NCC, leaving the field open for the regionalists.[253]

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[245] These were: Badr al-Sayyid Rajab al-Rifaʿi, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-Dusari, Salih ʿAbd al-Malik al-Salih, Ahmad al-Saqqaf, Hamad al-Rujaib, ʿAbd Allah Ahmad Husain, Yusuf al-Salih, and ʿUqab al-Khatib. MEC: S1, 3/10/1950.
[246] "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biʿtha*, November-December 1950, 335; ʿIsa al-Hamad, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 18.
[247] MEC: S28, 2/9/1951.
[248] MEC: S25, 136/1951.
[249] MEC: S3, 17/10/1950.
[250] The next raise apparently occurred in 1952-1953. MEC: S38, 10/6/1952.
[251] "Musawat," *al-Iman*, September 1953, 475; Khalid al-Khrafi, "al-Taʿlim fi al-Kuwait," *al-Raʾid,* March 1953, 994.
[252] MEC: S20, 14/4/1951; S14, 16/1/1951.
[253] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.

The Kuwaiti teachers' efforts to improve their position within the Educational Department soon led to rivalry between them and the more senior and qualified Palestinians.[254] Excerpts from the memoirs of Ahmad Bishr al-Rumi, a member of the 1952 Educational Council, provide an example of this. In March 1952, the Council was planning a trip of secondary school students to Iraq and wanted a Kuwaiti to oversee the party.[255] It insisted on appointing al-Rumi in this role, though he initially refused, partly because he did not want to cause tension between the Kuwaiti and Palestinian teachers. Such tension did in fact arise over which teachers would accompany the students on the trip. The Palestinian teachers maintained that only they, as teachers of the secondary school students, should be allowed to go. The Kuwaiti teachers, on the other hand, demanded that all teachers be given the opportunity to participate. Al-Rumi ultimately convinced the Palestinians to allow four Kuwaiti primary school headmasters to attend.[256]

The regionalist current among the Kuwaiti teachers was strengthened by the election of a largely sympathetic Educational Council in January 1952. These elections, which were also held for the Municipal, Health, and Awqaf Councils, were yet another liberalizing policy introduced by the new ruler Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Salim.[257] They provided Kuwait's budding political movements with a new arena for contention. However, since the franchise was limited to merchants and the *muthaqqafīn* were mostly too young to run, the latter could only support their preferred candidates.[258]

Despite the election of the staunch Arab nationalist and NCC cofounder al-Saniᶜ, al-Khatib states that the Educational Council came under the control of the

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[254] Al-Khatib, 189.
[255] MEC: S21, 3/3/1952.
[256] Qtd. in Yaᶜqub al-Ghunaim, Introduction to *Ahmad Bishr al-Rumi: Qiraʾa fi Awraqihi al-Khasa*, 54-56.
[257] "PR to Sarell, 8/1/1952," *Diaries,* Vol. 19, 172; "PR to Furlonge, 1/12/1951," *Diaries,* Vol. 19, 156.
[258] Al-Khatib, 187-188.

regionalists.[259] The regionalist sympathies of the majority were made clear when the NCC submitted its basic law to the Council for approval. Some members objected to the clause allowing non-Kuwaiti Arabs to become full members of the club. Khalid al-Zaid thus declared: "The Kuwaiti clubs must be for Kuwaitis only, and there is no need to include foreigners within this field." The Council supported this position,[260] though it was apparently unable to force the NCC to change its law. On the other hand, the new Council strongly supported the Teachers' Club. In the same month as it was elected, the Council approved a 1000 rupee monthly subvention to the club for the publication of *al-Raʾid*,[261] which it raised to 2000 rupees two months later.[262]

According to Al-Mdairis, the regionalist movement also initially dominated the Graduates' Club,[263] which was established in December 1953.[264] However, this club displayed a similar ambiguity towards Arab nationalism as the Teachers' Club. Among the goals listed in its basic law was "the spread of Arab national awareness and the contribution, alongside other Arab organizations, to freedom, independence, and unity." At the same time, the club differed markedly from the NCC in that it excluded non-Kuwaitis from membership.[265]

After a period of intense rivalry with the Arab nationalists, the Kuwaiti regionalist movement seems to have disappeared from the political scene. In 1954, an Arab nationalist list unseated the regionalists in the Teachers' Club elections,[266] and the MAN won control of the Graduates' Club soon afterwards.[267] By the time of the 1956

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[259] Ibid., 188. The council's members were: Mashʿan al-Khudair, Yusuf al-ʿAdsani, Khalid al-Zaid, Mishari Hasan al-Badr, Ahmad Bishr al-Rumi, Sulaiman al-ʿAdsani, Khalifa Khalid al-Ghunaim, Sayyid ʿAli bin Sayyid Sulaiman al-Rifaʿi, Sultan al-Kulaib, ʿAbd Allah ʿAli al-Saniʿ, Muhammad Qasim al-Mudaf, and Muhammad Mulla Husain al-Turkait. MEC: "Aʿdaʾ Majlis al-Maʿarif – Jalsat Majlis al-Maʿarif min 22/11/1951 ila 28/5/1952."
[260] MEC: S28, 15/4/1952.
[261] MEC: S11, 7/1/1952.
[262] MEC: S25, 1/4/1952.
[263] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 182.
[264] *Al-Qanun al-Asasi li-Nadi al-Khirrijin*, 1; MEC: S77, 20/12/1953.
[265] Ibid., 3-4.
[266] Al-Khatib, 123-124, 190; Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 181.
[267] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 182.

Suez Crisis, the principal leaders of the regionalist movement, such as al-Rujaib and al-ᶜAdwani, would be incorporated into the Arab nationalist opposition.

The speed with which the so-called regionalist movement dissipated supports the position that it was not based on a firm ideological basis, and that personal and factional differences among the *muthaqqafīn* played a role in the split. The latter point is suggested by the following comment published in *al-Biᶜtha* in 1952:

> There are two factions in Kuwait engaged in a tug of war. Each faction attacks the morality of the other, and claims that they are nationalist and the other is regionalist! It is obvious to the neutral observer that neither is in fact nationalist or regionalist, but that both are merely engaging in blind factionalism.[268]

The article goes on to state that "each faction supports a particular Arab state,"[269] suggesting that this division might have been tied to the rivalry between Egyptians and Palestinians in the Educational Department.[270] This is supported by the cooperation between the Kuwaiti regionalists and the Egyptian Ministry of Education in pushing for the replacement of the Palestinian Darwish al-Miqdadi as Director of Education. This point will be discussed in greater detail below. It is thus possible that the regionalists' combination of Kuwaiti patriotism with Arab nationalist rhetoric was inspired by the example of Egypt, where territorial identity remained strong despite the infiltration of Arab nationalist ideas. This might explain why these "Egyptophile" Kuwaitis merged so readily with the Arab nationalist movement after the rise of Nasserism in Egypt.

The Educational Department became a primary arena of competition between the various political movements of the *muthaqqafīn*. This rivalry played out on two levels: the grassroots and the administrative. Al-Shirbasi relates an incident that demonstrates how these movements used the schools to disseminate their ideologies on the grassroots level, independent of the department's policies. In December 1952, the Sharqiyya School held a celebration of the Prophet's birthday. The speakers at the event

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[268] Marzuq al-Ghunaim, "Qawmiyyun," *al-Biᶜtha,* May 1952, 218.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Al-Khatib, 188-189.

were the school's headmaster Ahmad al-Saqqaf, the Palestinian teacher Ribhi al-ᶜArif, and another teacher probably from Egypt.[271] ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain and Ahmad al-Khatib were also invited to speak, even though the latter had no connection to the Educational Department. According to al-Shirbasi, the speakers commemorated the occasion in secular, Arab nationalist terms. A play portraying a battle between the Muslims and Byzantines was also "more Arab than Islamic in tone."[272]

In response, the Islamists held their own celebration four days later at the Murqab School, located in a particularly conservative neighborhood of Kuwait Town. Apparently intending to provoke the nationalists, an Azharite religious teacher at the school condemned the pre-Islamic history of the Arabs in his speech.[273] Three days later, ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain gave a lecture on the local radio entitled "*Shuᶜubiyya*[274] Among the Arabs," which was directed against the Azharite teacher and the Egyptian Educational Mission more broadly.[275] It thus appears that in the early 1950s, particular schools came under the influence of various political groups. Al-Saqqaf thus recalls that he emphasized "nationalist guidance (*al-tawjīh al-qawmī*)" after he was appointed headmaster of the Sharqiyya School.[276] A report on the school's activities in the academic year 1952-1953 lists other nationalistic activities, including a weekly wall magazine on the "affairs of the Arab homeland," and a picture gallery on the theme of "Arab heroism."[277]

The various political movements of the early 1950s also competed with each other to secure assistance for their clubs and periodicals from the Educational Department. The latter supported these activities in the absence of other government

[271] Al-Shirbasi names him as Muhammad Sulaiman, a name that appears in the list of Egyptian teachers seconded to Kuwait in 1952. See "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1952, 365.
[272] Al-Shirbasi, *Ayyam al-Kuwait,* 445-446.
[273] Al-Shirbasi names him as Muhammad Yusuf Ibrahim, who is listed among the teachers seconded by al-Azhar in 1952. See "Huna al-Kuwait", *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1952, 364.
[274] "An anti-Arab cultural movement in early Islam; by extension, any local nationalist orientation or tendency." Jankowski and Gershoni ed., *Rethinking Nationalism*, 339.
[275] Al-Shirbasi, 447-448.
[276] Al-Saqqaf, Interview by Milaiji, 271.
[277] Hamza ᶜUlayyan, "Tisᶜ Sanawat min ᶜUmr al-Madrasa al-Sharqiyya," *al-Qabas*, September 16, 2010.

institutions dealing with cultural and social affairs. The department assisted local periodicals through subscribing to large numbers of issues, which were then disseminated to schools and libraries. For example, it subscribed to sixty issues per month of the satirical *al-Fukaha* (Humor), established in 1950.[278] After the department first provided financial assistance to the Teachers' Club in April 1951, the other newly established clubs began to ask for equal treatment, drawing upon their educational connections to put pressure on the Educational Council.

The Arab nationalists secured support for the al-Ahli Club and the NCC through the offices of the nationalist Educational Council member ʿAbd Allah ʿAli al-Saniʿ. In December 1951, the council approved a petition by the newly licensed al-Ahli Club for monetary assistance.[279] It allocated a 5000 rupee subvention to the club in February 1952, but al-Saniʿ interceded and trebled the amount.[280] In June, the council allocated the same amount to the NCC, but declined a request to subsidize the club's magazine.[281] The Muslim Brotherhood was able to rely on Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi, the influential former Director of Education and honorary president of the Islamic Guidance Society, to obtain assistance. Al-Qinaʿi wrote to the council in October 1952 requesting stationary and books for the Society's literacy program, and the council complied.[282] The amount of assistance provided to the clubs would increase significantly over the coming years.

In 1952, the Educational Department became the focus of a much larger struggle as the regionalists in the Teachers' Club sought to win control of the institution for Kuwait's *muthaqqafīn*. Their success marked the rising influence of this dynamic and ambitious social stratum, ushering in a new era in the department's history.

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[278] MEC: S18, 20/2/1951.
[279] MEC: S9, 17/12/1951.
[280] MEC: S19, 24/2/1952; S18, 22/2/1952.
[281] MEC: S42, 29/6/1952.
[282] MEC: S49, 21/10/1952; S48, 6/10/1952.

The Educational Department Under ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain: A Tripartite Administration, 1952-1956

The Educational Department's final "coup" occurred with the appointment of the Kuwaiti ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain as Director of Education in the summer of 1952. Pedagogical administration thus came under Kuwaiti control for the first time since the arrival of the first Palestinian teachers in 1936. Ironically, however, the department's dependence upon Arab expatriate staff in fact increased over the decade as Kuwaitis abandoned the teaching profession. The Palestinian teachers, represented most prominently by al-Miqdadi, and the newly returned Egyptian Educational Mission continued to wield a great deal of influence within the department. Educational policy under Husain thus reflected the influence of all three groups: Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn*, Palestinians, and Egyptians.

In the first half of 1952, several forces converged to replace Darwish al-Miqdadi with ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain as Director of Education, namely: the Educational Council, the Teachers' Club, and Egyptian Ministry of Education. Regionalist tendencies motivated both the Educational Council and the Teachers' Club to seek the "Kuwaitization" of the Educational Department's leadership.[283] They also accused al-Miqdadi's administration of mismanaging the department. It has already been stated that in its first month, the newly elected Educational Council raised questions regarding al-Miqdadi's implementation of the Egyptian curriculum, instating a committee to investigate the issue. At the same time, the council also criticized the department's methods of inspection.[284]

Other criticisms of al-Miqdadi's administration were also brought before the council. An excerpt from the memoires of the Educational Council member Ahmad Bishr al-Rumi reveals that he met with the Palestinian teachers Muhammad Najim and

[283] Al-Khatib, 190; Abu al-Jubayn, 155.
[284] MEC: S14, 23/1/1952.

ᶜAbd al-Latif al-Salih in February 1952. Both had taught in Kuwait in the 1930s. Another councilman and Ahmad al-ᶜAdwani, a leader of the Teachers' Club, were also present. Al-Rumi reports that the two Palestinian teachers accused al-Miqdadi and his associates of favoritism and mismanagement.[285] According to al-Rujaib's memoires, the Teachers' Club made similar accusations in a letter to the Educational Council. Al-Rujaib recalls that the decision to send the letter was made in a meeting attended by himself, al-ᶜAdwani, and a number of Kuwaiti headmasters.[286] The letter concluded by arguing that only a Kuwaiti could solve the problems plaguing the Educational Department.[287] It is not clear if the letter specifically requested the appointment of ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, who had strong ties to the leadership of the Teachers' Club.

The Egyptian Ministry of Education's Rida-Hamdi committee also added its voice to the accusations against al-Miqdadi. In addition to its aforementioned criticisms of the curriculum, the committee faulted the department's provisions for inspection and examinations. It also questioned the qualifications of some Palestinian teachers.[288] As has been argued, the Rida-Hamdi report was clearly intended to denounce al-Miqdadi's administration. It is possible that the Egyptian Ministry of Education wished to see him removed due to his reluctance to cooperate with it and his low opinion of the Egyptian educational system.

It is also highly possible that the Egyptians supported the Educational Council's decision to appoint ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain as Director of Education. The council took this decision on May 18th, when the Rida-Hamdi committee was still in the country. Moreover, Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir, the President of the Educational Department, wrote to the Egyptian Minister of Education Taha Husain informing him of the decision. Al-Jabir expressed his hope that ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain's appointment would

[285] Al-Rumi, 53-54.
[286] These were ᶜUqab al-Khatib, Salih ᶜAbd al-Malik al-Salih, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Dusari, and Badr al-Sayyid Rajab al-Rifaᶜi.
[287] Al-Rujaib, 101.
[288] Rida and Hamdi, 16-18, 31-32.

"usher in a new, blessed era of cooperation" between the educational authorities of Egypt and Kuwait.[289] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain had acquired extensive connections in Cairo while Director of Bait al-Kuwait, making him well placed to mediate between the Egyptian and Kuwaiti authorities. He later stated in an interview that his intention upon assuming the directorship was to pursue educational cooperation with Egypt.[290] A 1953 British Council report described him as "impregnated with Egyptian ideas."[291]

Husain's appointment as Director of Education was by no means a surprise. In September 1949, he stepped down as Director of Bait al-Kuwait.[292] As early as April 1950, Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir described Husain to a British Council representative "as the future Director of Education."[293] In May, the shaykh added that he wished for Husain to study in Great Britain for two years before his appointment. By this time, Husain had already been awarded a two-year scholarship by the British Council to pursue a diploma at the University of London's Institute of Education. As part of his studies, he wrote a dissertation entitled "English Educational Thought and Practice,"[294] also travelling to Scotland and Sweden to study the educational systems there.[295] Upon completing his studies, Husain returned to Kuwait to become director in June 1952.[296]

The plan to appoint Husain as director thus preceded the employment of al-Miqdadi, and it possibly would have been implemented regardless of the regionalists' pressure and al-Miqdadi's alleged shortcomings. However, some British documents mention plans to appoint Husain as assistant director.[297] This suggests that the aforementioned factors may have expedited Husain's appointment to the position of full

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[289] Ibid., Appendix 4.
[290] Mustafa, "ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain," 120.
[291] BW/114/7: Highwood to Jardine, 27/10/1953.
[292] "Fi Bait al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, July 1949, 212.
[293] BW/114/11: Report, Craig-Bennett, 19-22 April 1950.
[294] BW/114/7: Ricketts to Muir, 12/4/1955; BW/114/11: Report, Keight, 15-22 October 1950; Report, Keight, May 1950; Report, Dobson, 21-22 May 1950; "Huna al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1951, 270.
[295] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "Takafuᵓ Furas al-Taᶜlim," *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1951, 244-245; "Nazra fi Janib min Nizam al-Taᶜlim fi al-Suwaid," *al-Biᶜtha*, August 1951, 204-205.
[296] MEC: S39, 14/6/1952.
[297] FO/1016/218: Highwood to Pelly, 31/1/1952; BW/114/11: Report, Keight, 15-22 October 1950.

director.

While Husain would emerge as a staunch Nasserist by the time of the 1956 Suez Crisis, it is difficult to pinpoint his political orientation when he first took charge of the Educational Department. His editorials in *al-Biʿtha* between 1948 and 1950 reveal a zealously modernistic and reformist outlook, but apart from a single article written during the 1948 Palestine War, they are virtually devoid of Arab nationalist rhetoric.[298] He was also very close to the regionalist leaders like his former classmate at al-Azhar Ahmad al-ʿAdwani and his deputy at Bait al-Kuwait Hamad al-Rujaib. After Husain's appointment, the Teachers' Club held a celebration in which al-Rujaib declared that the decision "restored dignity to patriotism." He added that a country may draw upon foreign experts, but its "loyal sons" should always be in a position of control.[299]

It appears that, like the other "Egyptophile" leaders of the Teachers' Club, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain's Arab nationalist views became stronger as the Nasserist government gradually came to adopt this ideology around the mid-1950s. In his report for the academic year 1955-1956, published a few months before the eruption of the Suez Crisis, the British Council stated with regards to Husain:

> I have come across indications that he may not only be idealistically "Arab-Nationalist" but more deeply involved with Egypt. For example when the Egyptian head-master of the biggest primary school recently visited Bahrain on the eve of the riots there, he went with personal introductions to the Revolutionary Council [i.e. the Bahraini opposition's High Executive Committee] from the Director of Education… I was told this by the Director himself.[300]

The Egyptian headmaster in question was in fact expelled from Bahrain for making an inflammatory speech at an opposition rally.[301] As shall be seen, it was also during 1955-1956 that the Educational Department adopted the first national Kuwaiti curriculum, with the spread of Arab national awareness as one of its goals.

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[298] ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain, "Tariq al-Majd," *al-Biʿtha*, June 1948, 99.
[299] "Haflat Takrim," *al-Raʾid,* June 1952, 473-474.
[300] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1955-1956, 3.
[301] BW/114/7: Burrows to Lloyd, 9/6/1956.

Husain's personal views were by no means the only factor that determined the ideological climate within the Educational Department. During his tenure, three distinct groups governed the institution and shaped its policies: the Palestinian teachers, the Egyptian Educational Mission, and the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn*. Unlike earlier "coups" within the department, Husain's administration did not completely break with the ancien régime. This was due to the fact that after initial reluctance,[302] Darwish al-Miqdadi agreed to stay on as Assistant Director of Education "with most of the privileges and powers which he formerly had."[303] In a conversation with the Political Agent, al-Miqdadi criticized the impatience and fickleness of Kuwait's educational authorities. However, he stated "that he sympathised with the desire to have Kuwaitis at the heads of the departments, and indeed had always taken the line that he and the other Palestinians were there to train the Kuwaitis to take up these jobs."[304] As shall be seen, al-Miqdadi would continue to pursue his agenda of curricular reform from his new position.

Most of al-Miqdadi's appointees, however, did not stay on. Apart from the Inspector of English Hasan al-Dabbagh, the remaining inspectors and the headmaster of the secondary school were demoted to the rank of teachers and therefore apparently chose to quit. Although Najlaʾ Abu ʿIz al-Din was retained as Director of Girls' Education,[305] this was to be her final year in Kuwait. She later confided to her former student Fatima Husain that she faced a great deal of opposition from within the department. Moreover, she was falsely accused of fomenting a strike carried out by the female secondary school students, who objected to the replacement of their Palestinian teachers by Egyptians.[306] An Egyptian replaced ʿIz al-Din as inspector of girl's

[302] FO/371/98457: PA to PR, 2/6/1952.
[303] FO/1016/218: Keight to PR, 2/7/1952; MEC: S39, 14/6/1952.
[304] FO/371/98457: PA to PR, 2/6/1952.
[305] MEC: S39, 14/6/1952.
[306] Fatima Husain, 84-86, 201.

education in 1953-1954.[307] Numerous Palestinian teachers were also discharged in the summer of 1952 after an Educational Council subcommittee ruled that they lacked the proper qualifications, an issue raised in the Rida-Hamdi report.[308] Most notably, over seventy female Palestinian teachers were let go.[309] Nevertheless, the Educational Department continued to engage Palestinian teachers in large numbers, and they continued to form by far the largest contingent within the department throughout the decade. Between the academic years 1955-1956 and 1961-1962, they comprised around half of male teachers and a slightly larger proportion of female teachers.[310]

The Egyptian Educational Mission, which returned to Kuwait at the start of the academic year 1952-1953, occupied most of the senior positions vacated by the Palestinians. However, while the heads of previous missions occupied the position of Director of Education, the new mission's administrator ʿAbd al-Majid Mustafa became headmaster of the new Shuwaikh Secondary School.[311] Mustafa had previously been deputed to Kuwait in 1946,[312] and in 1947 he occupied the position of headmaster of the short-lived Sharqiyya Secondary School.[313] The new mission also included other Kuwait veterans such as the aforementioned Arab nationalist poet Ahmad ʿAnbar.[314] Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Egyptians would not form the majority of teachers in Kuwait as they did in the 1940s. Rather, between 1955-1956 and 1961-1962, they formed roughly 30% of teachers in both boys' and girls' schools. This made them the

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[307] Abu al-Jubayn, 156.
[308] FO/371/98458: Hay to Greenhill, 11/11/1952; MEC: S37, 8/6/1952; Abu al-Jubayn 155.
[309] FO/1016/218: Keight to PR, 2/7/1952.
[310] *Al-Taqrir al-Sanawi li-l-ʿAm al-Dirasi 1961-1962* (Kuwait: Wizarat al-Tarbiyya), 282; *Taqrir 1960-1961*, 283; *al-Taqrir al-Sanawi li-l-ʿAm al-Dirasi 1959-1960* (Kuwait: Daʾirat al-Maʿarif), 292; *al-Taqrir al-Sanawi li-l-ʿAm al-Dirasi 1958-1959* (Kuwait: Daʾirat al-Maʿarif), 170; *al-Taqrir al-Sanawi li-l-ʿAm al-Dirasi 1957-1958* (Kuwait: Daʾirat al-Maʿarif), 161; *al-Taqrir al-Sanawi li-l-ʿAm al-Dirasi 1956-1957* (Kuwait: Daʾirat al-Maʿarif), 140; *al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, Charts 11-12.
[311] FO/371/98458: Keight to PR, 27/10/1952.
[312] IOR/R/15/5/198: Wakelin to Tandy, 20/9/1946.
[313] "Huna al-Kuwait", *al-Biʿtha*, November 1947, 247.
[314] "Huna al-Kuwait", *al-Biʿtha*, September 1952, 365.

second most prevalent nationality within the department after the Palestinians.[315]

The Egyptian mission's influence within the Educational Department nevertheless remained strong owing to the positions occupied by its members. They comprised the majority of inspectors, as well as the headmasters of the male and female secondary schools, the Technical School, and the Religious Academy.[316] Egyptians also occupied the vast majority of teaching positions within these advanced institutions. In 1955-1956, Egyptians formed 70.3% of teachers at the male secondary school and 83.3% of teachers at the female secondary school. A similar disparity can be seen in the geographic distribution of teachers, with a much larger proportion of Palestinians serving in village schools in comparison to Egyptians. Out of a total of 97 male and 72 female Egyptian primary school teachers in 1955-1956, only one male and one female taught at village schools. By contrast, 29.6% (99/334) of male Palestinian primary school teachers and 21.6% (52/241) of females were assigned to villages.[317]

Egyptian influence in education must also be considered as part of Cairo's overall influence within the Kuwaiti bureaucracy. It has already been stated that Egyptian technical assistance began to extend beyond the Educational Department in the late 1940s, most notably in the courts. This assistance increased after the Educational Mission returned. By 1955, the Egyptian government had placed advisers and technicians in the Police, Finance, Social Affairs, and Press and Publishing departments.[318] In June 1954, Egypt submitted a request to Great Britain to open a consulate in Kuwait, a privilege then afforded only to the US.[319] When the British later asked the Egyptians to justify this request, they replied that they had a "special

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[315] *Taqrir 1961-1962*, 282; *Taqrir 1960-1961*, 283; *Taqrir 1959-1960*, 292; *Taqrir 1958-1959*, 170; *Taqrir 1957-1958*, 161; *Taqrir 1956-1957*, 140; *al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, Charts 11-12.
[316] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1955-1956, 2.
[317] *Al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, Charts 11-12.
[318] "Jalsat Majlis al-Maᶜarif al-24, 18/10/1955," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, October 22, 1955, 1; *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, September 3, 1955, 5; "Taqrir Daᵓirat al-Shuᵓun al-Ijtimaᶜiyya fi al-Kuwait," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, May 21, 1955, 10; *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, February 5, 1955, 2; FO/371/114760: Pelly to Fry, 5/4/1955; "Memorandum," Egyptian Embassy London, 4/3/1955.
[319] FO/371/114760: FO Minute, Fry, 3/1/1955.

position" in Kuwait because of the many Egyptian missions there.[320] A month after this request, a British report stated that Egyptian personnel in Kuwait (primarily teachers) served as the "main channel" for the penetration of Cairo's influence into the country. Egypt's widely popular press and Voice of the Arabs radio station played a secondary role. The report deemed that the Egyptian influence in Kuwait was the strongest out of all the Gulf states.[321]

The resumption of Egypt's Educational Mission to Kuwait greatly worried the British. In their view, it undermined their own recent gains in influencing Kuwaiti education, particularly with regards to sending scholarships to the UK.[322] More importantly, they suspected the Egyptian teachers of playing a political role, whether through propagandizing in the classroom or even organizing on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood.[323] The Egyptians' return was a primary motivation behind the opening of a British Council center in Kuwait in 1955.[324]

After the Palestinian and Egyptian teachers, the third element that governed education in Kuwait was the indigenous *muthaqqafīn*, with which control over the department ultimately resided. When ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain assumed the helm of the department in 1952-1953, the total number of Kuwaiti teachers was at its peak. There were 121, forming a respectable 44.3% of male teachers.[325] However, their numbers declined rapidly. By 1956-1957 they dwindled to 96, a mere 11% of the male teaching staff.[326] They reached a low of 58, or 4.6%, in 1960-1961.[327] As oil income increased throughout the 1950s, high-income jobs and business opportunities became increasingly available to educated Kuwaitis, and teaching became less attractive. The men's teacher

[320] FO/371/114760: "Memorandum," Egyptian Embassy London, 4/3/1955; FO Minute, IK, 19/1/1955.
[321] FO/371/108563: Burrows to Bromley, 26/7/1954; PA Kuwait, 8/6/1954.
[322] FO/371/98457: Rose to LeQuesne, 24/5/1952.
[323] FO/371/108563: Burrows to Bromley, 26/7/1954; PA Kuwait, 8/6/1954; FO/924/1044: FO minute, Fry, 11/5/1954; FO/371/109936: Pelly to Fry, 22/12/1953; BW/114/7: Highwood to Jardine, 27/10/1953.
[324] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1955-1956; BW/114/4: Haigh to Highwood, 11/3/1953; FO/371/98458: Greenhill to Hay, 22/12/1952.
[325] *Taqrir 1952-1953*, 12.
[326] *Taqrir 1956-1957*, 140.
[327] *Taqrir 1960-1961*, 283.

training classes were closed due to lack of interest between 1953 and 1955, and the few remaining trainees were sent abroad on scholarships.[328] The Educational Department's dependence on expatriate Arab teachers was thus reinforced, a factor that may have contributed to the regionalist movement's decline and a corresponding rise in Arab nationalism among Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* in the educational field.

Despite the decline in local teachers, the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* remained an influential element within the Educational Department. One guarantee of their continued presence was the scholarship regulations, which required Kuwaiti graduates to work for the government for a number of years. In the early 1950s, all graduates served in the Educational Department.[329] At some point in the decade, they began to be appointed to other departments, but the Educational Department continued to control their appointment. It was not until 1961 that the Educational Council decided it would employ only those graduates specialized in education.[330]

In addition, some Kuwaiti teachers did not in fact leave the department but were promoted to administrative positions within it. The department's reports unfortunately provide no statistical data regarding these positions, but this trend is observed in the case of a number of teachers. For example, the long serving teacher Ahmad al-ᶜAdwani was promoted to the position of financial and administrative secretary of the Educational Department in 1954.[331] Fresh graduates also rose to the administrative level after teaching only briefly. In 1952, Khalid al-Khrafi obtained a degree in business from Cairo and returned to teach commercial education. He shortly became an accountant in the department and later assistant to the financial director before leaving the department in 1957.[332] Other graduates were directly appointed as administrators. Faisal al-Salih,

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[328] *Al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, 19.
[329] Hamid ᶜAbd al-Salam, "Araaᵓ al-Nas," *al-Biᶜtha,* June 1951, 220.
[330] "Jalsat Majlis al-Maᶜarif al-30, 24/4/1961," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, May 7, 1961, 17; "Jalsat Majlis al-Maᶜarif al-26, 20/2/1961," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, March 5, 1961, 34.
[331] MEC: S37, 5/9/1956; S6, 6/11/1954.
[332] Khalid al-Khrafi, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 228-229.

for example, was employed as Supervisor of Foreign Scholarships upon graduating from the University of Cairo in 1954. After five years he became Assistant to the Director of Cultural Affairs, and in 1961 Assistant Undersecretary of the department.[333]

While Husain's initial appointment as Director of Education can be seen as inimical to Arab nationalist influence within the department, this influence would in fact reach unprecedented levels during his tenure. This partly reflects the influence of other elements, namely al-Miqdadi and the post-revolutionary Egyptian Educational Mission. It also reflects Husain's own growing drift towards Arab nationalism, a trend that occurred throughout the *muthaqqafīn* stratum.

The Rise of the Educational Department's Nationalist Policies, 1952-1956:

While it was following the Suez Crisis that Arab nationalist influence reached its peak in the Educational Department, the institution in fact pursued a deliberate Arab nationalist agenda from near the beginning of Husain's directorship. While the British would later ascribe the department's nationalist policies to Egyptian influence, an examination of the beginnings of these policies reveals that al-Miqdadi and Husain were the main initial drivers behind them. Two of the department's most prominent policies in the period prior to the Suez Crisis were the introduction of the first national curriculum, and the introduction of a program of popular acculturation.

The return of the Egyptian Educational Mission brought Kuwait's curriculum closer in line with that of Egypt, undoing the modifications introduced by al-Miqdadi.[334] However, the situation soon came to favor a return to al-Miqdadi's project of forming a national curriculum, which had been previously rejected by the Educational Council. This shift in attitude within the Educational Department can be attributed to a number of factors.

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[333] Faisal al-Salih, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 136; al-Khrafi, 972.
[334] FO/371/98458: Keight to PR, 27/10/1952.

Firstly, beginning in the early 1950s, Kuwait's regionalist, Arab nationalist, and Islamist movements converged in opposing the Egyptian curriculum's inward, Egypt-centric focus. The local press criticized the curriculum's failure to deal with Kuwaiti history, geography, and literature.[335] Even the seconded Egyptian teacher Ahmad al-Shirbasi, in an interview with local radio in November 1952, called for textbooks "that provide the Kuwaiti student with a sense of his environment and homeland."[336] The Arab nationalists, meanwhile, demanded that the curriculum focus on Arab rather than Pharaonic history. A 1955 article in *al-Iman* states: "the curriculum makes the student in his early years know more about Khufu and Khafra than the eternal heroes of Arabism, and we consider this one of the factors that cause the student to deviate from the correct Arab path."[337] Others called for greater attention to religion in the curriculum.[338]

A second factor that facilitated the alteration of Kuwait's curriculum was the Free Officer's implementation of far-reaching curricular reform in 1953. As has been stated, the new curriculum engineered by Minister of Education Isma^{c}il Qabbani emphasized Arabic language and religion, and was prasied by al-Miqdadi even though it stopped short of incorporating Arab nationalist ideology. Kuwait continued to follow the old curriculum, which was now outmoded. The Egyptian curricular reform therefore paved the way for a similar action in Kuwait.

Crucially, there was also broad agreement among Kuwait's educational authorities on the necessity of curricular reform. This included ^{c}Abd al-^{c}Aziz Husain despite his pro-Egyptian inclinations. In March 1952, while still in Britain, Husain participated in a radio debate on the subject of unifying education in the Arab world. He

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[335] ^{c}Abd Allah al-Jarallah, "Khawatir," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, June 1953, 371; "al-Nadwa," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, May 1952, 234; Hamid ^{c}Abd al-Salam, "Ara$^{\circ}$ al-Nas," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, January 1952, 34.
[336] Al-Shirbasi, 412-413.
[337] "Majal al-Qurra$^{\circ}$," *al-Iman*, April 1955, 589-590. See also: ^{c}Abd Allah Ahmad Husain, "Ayn Yaqif al-Shabab al-Yawm?" *al-Iman*, January 1953, 20-21.
[338] MEC: S33, 12/5/1952; Yusuf al-Sayyid Hashim, "Nahdatuna al-Haditha," *al-Bi^{c}tha*, January and February, 1953, 43.

agreed with the other participants that while the educational systems of Arab countries should share the same principles, a degree of difference was necessary, particularly when it came to subjects such as history, geography, and civic education.[339]

Husain put these views into practice soon after his appointment as director, commissioning the first locally authored and printed textbooks for the kindergarten and elementary levels in 1953.[340] The authors were locally based Palestinian, Egyptian, and Kuwaiti teachers. Eleven textbooks were published by the spring of 1955: five for Arabic, one for math, two for geography, three for history, and one for civic education.[341] The latter three subjects were those most criticized in the Egyptian curriculum for their parochial focus. While the new geography textbooks deal with world geography and the discipline of geography,[342] the history and civic education textbooks focus on Kuwait and the Arab world, and were thus clearly intended to remedy the Egypt-centric character of the existing textbooks. They also reveal the influence of Arab nationalism while simultaneously emphasizing Kuwaiti patriotism.

The earliest of the history textbooks appears to be *Mudhakkirat al-Tarikh li-l-Sana al-Thaniyya al-Ibtidaʾiyya (History Aides-Memoires for the Second Elementary Year)*, published in 1953.[343] Two of its authors, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Hindawi and Husain ʿAbd al-Hamid, were secondary school teachers of the Egyptian Educational Mission.[344] The third, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Furaih, was a Kuwaiti primary level teacher and a graduate of Baghdad's Teacher Training College.[345] The textbook is made up of stories set in various periods extending from prehistory to ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, the time of Alexander the Great, the Islamic period, and pre-oil Kuwait.

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[339] "Tawhid al-Taʿlim fi al-Bilad al-ʿArabiyya," *al-Biʿtha,* May 1952, 203.
[340] Husain, Interview by Khalaf Allah, 53.
[341] Ismaʿil Qabbani and Matta ʿAqrawi, *Taqrir ʿan al-Taʿlim bi-l-Kuwait* (Egypt: Dar al-Kitab al-ʿArabi, 1955), 104-109.
[342] Ibid., 108.
[343] ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Hindawi, Husain ʿAbd al-Hamid, and ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Furaih, *Mudhakkirat al-Tarikh li-l-Sana al-Thaniyya al-Ibtidaʾiyya* (Kuwait: Maʿarif al-Kuwait, 1953).
[344] "Huna al-Kuwait", *al-Biʿtha*, September 1952, 365.
[345] FO/371/156925: Richmond to Beaumont, 12/2/1961.

A more substantial work is *Mukhtasar Tarikh al-ᶜArab li-l-Sana al-Thalitha al-Ibtidaᵓiyya (A Brief History of the Arabs for the Third Elementary Year)*.[346] The copy consulted is the fourth edition, published in 1954. It is not known when it was first published, and no author is listed. This work presents a typical Arab nationalist narrative with echoes of al-Miqdadi's *History of the Arab Nation*, portraying Islamic history as essentially Arab history. The "Arabs" rather than the "Muslims" are the protagonists, and the Islamic conquests are portrayed as ethnic conflicts between Arabs and Jews, Persians, and Romans. The conquering Arabs thus transform Persia into "an Arab province,"[347] and the Persians and Jews are blamed for instigating the infighting that occurred during the Rightly Guided Caliphate.[348] Furthermore, the Umayyads are praised for their role in spreading the Arabic language, "preserving Arab morals and traditions, Arabizing the diwans, and depending on Arab elements."[349] The Abbasids, on the other hand, experience political decline after "*ajānib* (foreigners)," i.e. Persians and Turks, assume the reigns of power.[350]

A more explicit Arab nationalist narrative can found in *Mudhakkirat al-Tarikh li-l-Sana al-Rabiᶜa al-Ibtidaᵓiyya (History Aides-Memoires for the Fourth Elementary Year)*. Published in 1953,[351] it deals with modern Arab history. Both of its authors were primary school teachers: Mustafa Shaᶜban Shaᶜira, an Egyptian,[352] and Hasan Anis Ibrahim, a Palestinian freshly graduated from the AUB.[353] The textbook provides an account of the Arab "*nahḍa*" or renaissance, starting with the rebellions of the Wahhabis and Egypt's Muhammad ᶜAli Pasha against the backward and unjust Turkish rule. The European powers are portrayed as the Turks' allies in oppressing the Arabs.

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[346] *Mukhtasar Tarikh al-ᶜArab li-l-Sana al-Thalitha al-Ibtidaᵓiyya*, 4th ed. (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait, 1954).
[347] Ibid., 28.
[348] Ibid., 39.
[349] Ibid., 67.
[350] Ibid., 70.
[351] The edition consulted was published in 1955.
[352] "Huna al-Kuwait", *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1952, 365.
[353] *Who's Who in the Arab World 2007-2008* (Beirut: Publitec Publications, 2007), 402.

The book moves on to discuss the Arab nationalist secret societies al-ᶜAhd and al-Fatat and Sharif Husain's Arab Revolt. It then turns to the West's betrayal of the Arabs and its imposition of colonialism, and lists the various uprisings against colonial rule throughout the Arab world.[354]

Following this general outline, a number of Arab countries are presented individually in short chapters that mostly emphasize the same themes of Ottoman degeneration, Arab rebirth, and Western colonialism. These are Kuwait, Iraq, *Bilad al-Sham* (Greater Syria encompassing Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan), Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Egypt.[355] Kuwait's history is thus presented in parallel with that of the other Arab countries. Although the chapter on Kuwait avoids the issue of colonialism, much attention is devoted to the recent advancements in the economy and education, placed under the heading "*ᶜaṣr al-nahḍa*" (the age of renaissance).[356] Kuwait's oil-fuelled development is thus portrayed as part of the Arab national reawakening.

The last of the textbooks in question is *Mudhakkirat al-Tarbiyya al-Wataniyya li-l-Sana al-Rabiᶜa al-Ibtidaᵓiyya (Civic Education Aides-Memoires for the Fourth Elementary Year).*[357] Its authors represent the three dominant elements in the Educational Department: Qasim ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz, an Egyptian secondary school teacher,[358] Sulaiman Abu Ghosh, a long serving Palestinian teacher who was then a primary school headmaster,[359] and the Kuwaiti Hamad al-Rujaib. Although no publication date is provided, al-Rujaib is listed as a headmaster, a position he occupied

[354] Mustafa Shaᶜban Shaᶜira and Hasan Anis, *Mudhakkirat al-Tarikh li-l-Sana al-Rabiᶜa al-Ibtidaᵓiyya* (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait, 1955), 23-38.
[355] Ibid., 41-110.
[356] Ibid., 56-63.
[357] Qasim ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz, Sulaiman Abu Ghosh, and Hamad al-Rujaib, *Mudhakkirat al-Tarbiyya al-Wataniyya li-l-Sana al-Rabiᶜa al-Ibtidaᵓiyya* (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait).
[358] "Huna al-Kuwait", *al-Biᶜtha*, September 1952, 365.
[359] Abu al-Jubayn, 110.

until being appointed to head the Educational Department's Social Division in November 1954. The textbook must therefore have been published before this date.

The book is largely concerned with defining basic political concepts such as *umma* (nation), *waṭan* and *waṭanīyya* (*patrie* and patriotism), and state and government. The nation is defined as "a group of people usually descended from a single origin and usually united by the same language, customs, interests, and ambitions." The students are taught that nations may be divided politically but retain their essential unity, as in the case of the Arab nation. Moreover, in discussing the role of "ambitions" in unifying nations, the book states that these "can be purely material as with the competition between [nations]… to sell their goods on the world market, or they can be old ambitions such as the ambition of the Arabs to form a unified Arab state."[360] A final chapter provides an overview of the various departments of the Kuwaiti government.[361]

The content of these textbooks reveals that the incorporation of Arab nationalist ideology into the curriculum was already occurring in a piecemeal fashion when Darwish al-Miqdadi revived his project of curricular reform. In a meeting of the Educational Council in June 1954, al-Miqdadi argued that the Educational Department "should have an outlined policy and a clear plan in which the goals of education are set out." The council agreed to engage some Arab experts to help draft such a plan.[362] In October, the council resolved to invite the former Egyptian Minister of Education Isma^{c}il Qabbani and the prominent Iraqi Christian educator Matta ^{c}Aqrawi, then working for UNESCO.[363]

The composition of this expert committee reflected the dual influence of the Egyptian Educational Mission and the Palestinian teachers, headed by al-Miqdadi. As stated earlier, Qabbani was the architect of Egypt's post-revolutionary curricular

[360] ^{c}Abd al-^{c}Aziz et al., 21-22.
[361] Ibid., 35-54.
[362] MEC: S8, 14/6/1954.
[363] MEC: S5, 30/10/1954.

reforms. ᶜAqrawi, on the other hand, was clearly al-Miqdadi's choice. The two men had studied together at the AUB and subsequently became colleagues at the Iraqi Ministry of Education. They went on to cofound the militaristic scouting group known as the Arab Rover Society in the early 1930s, both serving as its president at different times. Subsequently, they both joined the Red Book Group.[364] ᶜAqrawi's invitation is the first indication that the network associated with the defunct Red Book Group continued to influence Kuwaiti education even after al-Miqdadi's demotion. ᶜAqrawi went on to receive a PhD from Columbia University and became Director General of Higher Education in Iraq in the 1940s.[365]

It is unclear when Qabbani and ᶜAqrawi arrived in Kuwait, but they were there by early February 1955, when they both participated in the Educational Department's cultural season, which will be discussed below. While ᶜAqrawi gave a broad and technical lecture on contemporary educational trends,[366] Qabbani's talk provides insight into his ideological inclinations and perhaps an emerging Arab nationalist trend among Egyptian educators. In addition to emphasizing Arabic and Islamic studies in his 1953 curricular reforms, the former minister had also increased the proportion of Arab history at the expense of European history within Egypt's curriculum.[367] However, as has been stated, he did not incorporate Arab nationalist ideas, and the influence of Egyptian territorial nationalism persisted.[368] Secondary school students continued to be taught the subject of "Egyptian Society," which al-Miqdadi criticized for its exclusion of the Arab world.

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[364] Simon, *Iraq Between,* 78, 83, 194; Jeha, 255, 444; Fadil Husain, 247-248, 256.
[365] Roderic D. Matthews and Matta Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1949), v-vii.
[366] Matta ᶜAqrawi, "Ittijahat al-Tarbiyya fi ᶜAlam al-Yawm," *Muhadarat al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi al-Awwal* (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait, 1955), 191.
[367] Saᶜid Ismaᶜil ᶜAli, *al-Taᶜlim fi Zilal Thawrat Yulyu 1952* (Cairo: ᶜAlam al-Kitab, 2005), 89.
[368] Muhsin Khudr, *al-Ittijah al-Qawmi al-ᶜArabi fi al-Taᶜlim al-Misri 1952-1981* (Cairo: al-Hayᵓa al-Misriyya al-ᶜAma li-l-Kitab, 1992), 89; ᶜAli, 455.

The development of the Egyptian curriculum in the 1950s remains understudied.[369] However, existing works on the subject indicate that it was not until after the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) in 1958 that the Egyptian curriculum systematically incorporated Arab nationalism as a key theme.[370] For example, it was at this time that the subject of "Egyptian Society" was refashioned as "Arab Society,"[371] and certain history books were broadened to cover the Arab nation rather than just Egypt.[372] This reflects the fact that the Nasserist regime espoused Arab nationalist ideology only gradually. Arab nationalist rhetoric began to appear in Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir's speeches between 1954 and 1956, and was at first mainly intended for regional rather than domestic consumption.[373]

In light of the limited influence of Arab nationalist ideology within the Egyptian curriculum, it is surprising that Qabbani's speech is saturated with it. His nationalist rhetoric may indicate a trend among Egyptian educators, particularly those active on the Pan-Arab level, which preceded the top-down imposition of Arab nationalism on Egyptian education after 1958. Over the course of the 1950s, Egypt hosted and participated in numerous pan-Arab educational conferences, and in 1957 it signed the Arab League's Cultural Unity Agreement. These developments have been pointed to as factors behind the spread of Arab nationalist influence among Egyptian educators.[374] It is thus possible that, as with ᶜAbd al-Nasir's speeches, Arab nationalist rhetoric among Egyptian educators was initially directed outwards rather than inwards, but further research is required to verify this.

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[369] Podeh and Winckler state: "An extensive study of Egyptian education during the Nasserite period has yet to be written." Apparently, this remains the case today. Elie Podeh and Onn Winckler, "Introduction: Nasserism as a Form of Populism," in *Rethinking Nasserism: Revolution and Historical Memory in Modern Egypt*, ed. Elie Podeh and Onn Winckler (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 40.
[370] Khudr, 91-92, 104; Farida Makar and Ehaab Abdou, "Textbooks in Times of Change: Assembling Nationalist Discourses from 1952-1980 [provisional title]" (Unpublished manuscript, 2016).
[371] Ibid., 92.
[372] Atef Botros, "Reconfiguring the Past: History, Memory and Ideology in Egyptian History Textbooks Between 1932 and 2009," in *The Politics of Education Reform in the Middle East: Self and Other in Textbooks and Curricula*, ed. Samira Alayan et al. (New York and Oxford: Berghahn), 123-124, 127-128.
[373] Jankowski, 30-34; Khudr, 90.
[374] Khudr, 91.

In his speech entitled "The Goals of Education in the Arab Countries," Qabbani begins by affirming the centrality of education to the current Arab *nahḍa*. This *nahḍa* must be founded upon a "spiritual message," whose source is "national culture, i.e. the Arab-Islamic cultural heritage." The Arabs must strike a balance between this national culture and Western modernity.[375] One of the most important ways in which this spiritual foundation can be laid is through making national culture "the axis of all education," thus "providing pupils with a patriotic and religious upbringing that will inspire pride in their nationality and faith in their homeland."[376] All subjects must be infused with elements of the national culture, including those imported from the West. For example, when the concept of democracy is taught, reference should be made to the Rightly Guided Caliphate as an exemplar of democratic principles. The Western concept of democracy can thus be internalized within the national culture. Qabbani claims that this approach underlaid his 1953 reforms.[377] The latter half of his speech calls for an emphasis upon progressive and practical education.[378]

While in Kuwait, Qabbani and ᶜAqrawi naturally met with the Educational Department's administrators. In one such meeting attended by Qabbani in late February, a key issue discussed was the "desire to find a compromise between the Egyptian and Kuwaiti curriculums that would accord with the requirements of the local environment."[379] This demonstrates the centrality of the issue of political identity in the push towards educational reform in Kuwait. It also reveals that, as in the case of the aforementioned textbooks, the emphasis upon Arab nationalism and Kuwaiti identity went hand in hand.

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[375] Ismaᶜil Qabbani, "Ahdaf al-Taᶜlim fi-l-Bilad al-ᶜArabiyya," *Muhadarat al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi al-Awwal* (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait, 1955), 143-147.
[376] Ibid., 148.
[377] Ibid., 148-149.
[378] Ibid., 150-156.
[379] "Idarat al-Maᶜarif – Waqaᵓiᶜ al-Ijtimaᶜ al-Tamhidi 17/2/1955," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, February 26, 1955, 6.

Qabbani and ᶜAqrawi submitted their report to the Educational Department in March 1955. It reiterates the main themes in Qabbani's speech. At the same time, it resembles al-Miqdadi's educational project, particularly in its emphasis on Kuwaiti identity and Arab nationalism, as well as technical education and progressive practices. The document begins by affirming that as Kuwait modernizes, it must be careful to retain its Arab and Islamic identity, thus bringing about a synthesis between "the Western and Arab civilizations." Education, the report states, is one of the best ways to achieve this.[380] After analyzing the nature of Kuwaiti society and the challenges it faces,[381] the document sets out a number of goals for Kuwait's educational system, starting with the eradication of illiteracy. The second and third goals deal directly with Arab identity:

> 2- Spreading the teachings of religion and implanting the moral principles derived from religion and the best of Arab customs and traditions…
> 3- The propagation of the spirit of citizenship (*muwāṭana*) to Kuwait specifically and to Arabism (*ᶜUrūba*) generally, the propagation of the Arab national spirit, getting to know the Arab national legacy and preserving, developing, and modernizing it according to the spirit of the age, and mastering the Arabic literature and language.[382]

The remaining goals call for the fostering of "the democratic spirit," health awareness, "an inclination towards productive handiwork," sports and scouting, and the creative arts. The report goes on to make a series of detailed recommendations including the introduction of a new educational ladder with an intermediate level, mandatory education, and the development of teacher training and technical education.[383]

Some of the Qabbani-ᶜAqrawi report's key recommendations concern curricular reform. It begins its discussion of this issue by noting the close similarity between the Egyptian curriculum and that used in Kuwait. This resemblance is positive in that it has facilitated educational relations between Kuwait and Egypt, and it is "one of the goals

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[380] Qabbani and ᶜAqrawi, 7-8.
[381] Ibid., 9-14.
[382] Ibid., 15-16.
[383] Ibid., 16-18.

of the Arab countries" to bring their curriculums closer together.[384] However, the report holds that Kuwait has surpassed even the 1953 Egyptian curriculum in its emphasis upon "Arab culture and the subjects that strengthen the national spirit," i.e. Arabic and religious studies. The report recommends that this emphasis should continue, and even calls for further religious studies lessons at the secondary level.[385] The strength of Arabic and religious studies in Kuwait reveals that the local curriculum had already changed significantly from that of Egypt since Husain's appointment.

Secondly, the Qabbani-ᶜAqrawi report recommends that along with the Pan-Arab perspective, each Arab country must "emphasize its own history and geography." The segments of the Egyptian curriculum that deal exclusively with Egypt should be replaced, and history, geography, and civic education should focus on Kuwait and the Arabian Peninsula.[386] An additional suggestion calls for a select number of Kuwaiti schools to adopt the progressive curriculum used in certain "model schools" in Egypt.[387]

The publication of the Qabbani-ᶜAqrawi report marked a turning point in the development of Kuwait's educational system. The Educational Department accepted the report's primary recommendations, particularly those concerning the educational ladder and the curriculum, and decided to implement them gradually over the academic years 1955-1956 and 1956-1957.[388] In 1955-1956, the department created a committee of inspectors to draft Kuwait's first national curriculums for the primary and intermediate levels and prepare new textbooks. The department's annual report for this year states that the new curriculums "closely resemble those of Egypt in essence, but place greater

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[384] Ibid., 93.
[385] Ibid., 100-101.
[386] Ibid., 102.
[387] Ibid., 93-97.
[388] *Taqrir 1956-1957,* 21-22; *al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, 17; "Idarat al-Maʿarif: Mahdar al-Jalsa al-Khasa bi-l-Manahij al-Jadida," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, June 4, 1955, 8.

emphasis on religion and the English language, and ensure that subject material is suited to the local environment and in accordance with the department's goals."[389]

With regards to the secondary level, the department elected to retain the Egyptian curriculum, though Qabbani's 1953 version replaced that of 1947.[390] However, even in this case, changes were made to the "social subjects" (presumably history and geography) in order to "reflect the local environment."[391] It appears that changes were also made to introduce a Pan-Arab perspective. The Educational Department's 1955-1956 annual report states the following regarding the secondary school curriculum:

> The study plan in the new curriculums focuses on highlighting the Arab nationalist aspect in history lessons and considers each event in Arab history in whatever Arab country to be interconnected links in a single chain. The goal behind this is to clarify to the Arab student that the vast area in which the Arab nation resides is a single, indivisible *waṭan* with an indivisible history. The same is true of the geography lessons, which highlight the formative elements of Arab unity and their historical and geographical foundations.[392]

Although the 1953 Egyptian secondary school curriculum did place greater emphasis on Arab history as a supplement to the history of Egypt, there is no evidence that history and geography were taught in Arab nationalist terms. The report is unclear on this point, but it appears that this Arab nationalist orientation was the result of changes introduced by the Kuwaiti Educational Department. Evidence of these changes from the late 1950s will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Qabbani-ᶜAqrawi report was the primary stimulus behind the adoption of Arab nationalism as a key theme of the Kuwaiti curriculum in the second half of the 1950s. The report set down the "propagation of the Arab national spirit" as a principal goal of education in Kuwait, and by accepting the report the Educational Department was committing itself to this goal. When the department began publishing more

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[389] *Al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, 17-18.
[390] Ibid., 15.
[391] "Mahdar al-Jalsa al-Khasa," 8.
[392] *Al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, 15.

substantial annual reports in the academic year 1956-1957, these documents would outline the method of fostering Arab national awareness in an emphatic and detailed manner. The curriculum's Arab nationalist character would also be reflected in the new series of local textbooks that began to be written in 1955-1956. Both the annual reports and textbooks will be analyzed in detail subsequently.

Remarkably, the Qabbani-ᶜAqrawi report began the process of incorporating Arab nationalist guidance into the Kuwaiti curriculum at a time when Egypt itself had yet to do so. The report's publication and adoption even predated the Suez Crisis, which made Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir a Pan-Arab hero. Given the British preoccupation with Egyptian influence over education in Kuwait, it is important to note that Egypt's role in introducing Arab nationalism to the curriculum was in fact secondary. Rather, the main drivers behind curricular reform were Darwish al-Miqdadi and ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain. The former pushed for such measures from the early 1950s and proposed forming the Qabbani-ᶜAqrawi committee, while the latter began the process by commissioning the first locally authored textbooks in 1953. This demonstrates the importance of the Palestinians and the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* in spreading Arab nationalist influence within the Educational Department.

A second policy adopted by the Educational Department during the first years of ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain's directorship was a drive to disseminate *thaqāfa*, i.e. the modern knowledge of the *muthaqqafīn*, beyond the classroom to society at large. As has been argued, this missionary attitude towards modern education was a feature of the *muthaqqafīn* mindset. Ministries of culture, social affairs, or information would normally have conducted much of the Educational Department's activity in this field. However, the fluid, rudimentary, and decentralized nature of Kuwait's state institutions, coupled with the Educational Department's extensive resources and capable leadership, allowed it to broaden its purview. The department gradually ceded control over some of

these activities to the departments of Social Affairs and Press and Publishing as they developed.

The most prominent program through which the Educational Department sought to edify society was its annual cultural season. It was first proposed by Husain in mid 1954, launched in February 1955, and held annually thereafter.[393] The department's report for 1955-1956 places the lecture series under the rubric of "popular acculturation (*al-thaqāfa al-shaᶜbīyya*)." It states that "the Educational Department is keen to transfer modern culture (*al-thaqāfa al-ᶜasrīyya*) to the members of the public in various ways," including literacy programs, vocational training, and the cultural season.[394] The motivation behind the season are further clarified in the introduction to the book in which the first season's lectures were compiled. It lists the following goals for the season: "strengthening literary and scientific ties between rising Kuwait and its big sisters," "spreading cultural awareness… among the people of Kuwait, especially the increasing numbers of educated youth (*muthaqqafīn*)," and confirming "the close bond between the notable Arab intellectuals and their Kuwaiti pupils and brothers."[395] The next season's book was more emphatic in outlining the event's nationalist goals, stating: "a unified direction in culture and opinion… is the primary pillar upon which comprehensive unity will be based."[396]

Arab nationalism was the central theme of the cultural season. The British Political Resident complained that some of the 1955 season's lectures "were the occasion for the expression in public of a good deal of violent Arab nationalism." The following year, the "season's course of lectures… released similar emotions."[397] The resident added that while commenting on the lectures, the head of the Egyptian Educational Mission made "objectionable references to Western activity in the Arab

[393] MEC: S5, 12/5/1954.
[394] *Al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956,* 24.
[395] *Muhadarat al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi al-Awwal 1374/1955* (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait, 1955), 5.
[396] *Muhadarat al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi al-Thani 1375/1956* (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait, 1956), 4.
[397] "Burrows to Riches, 16/2/1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 89.

World in general and to the Bagdad Pact in particular." The Political Agent therefore protested the event's "undesirable anti-Western and political tone" to Kuwait's ruler.[398]

Most of the season's lecturers either had Arab nationalist associations or spoke on topics related to Arab identity. Former members of the Red Book Group participated in both the 1955 and 1956 seasons, suggesting the involvement of Darwish al-Miqdadi. In 1955 these were Matta ᶜAqrawi and the Iraqi Jabir ᶜUmar, both of whom were also former members of the Arab Rover Society.[399] Those who participated in 1956 were the Syrian Amjad al-Trabulsi and none other than Qustantin Zuraiq, spiritual leader of both the Red Book Group and the MAN. While al-Trabulsi spoke on Arab nationalism in Levantine poetry, Zuraiq delivered a lecture entitled "The Arabs and Modern Culture" and another on the importance of historical study in the Arab nation's current situation.[400] Members of the Red Book Group network would continue to participate in the season in coming years.

Other speakers in 1955 included the Iraqi historian ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz al-Duri, a prominent Arab nationalist, who lectured on Arab history. Qadri Tuqan, the headmaster of the nationalist influenced al-Najah School of Palestine, spoke on the contributions of the Arabs to science.[401] Notable speakers in 1956 included the Lebanese academic Niqula Ziyada, who spoke on the Maghreb, and the Iraqi Arab nationalist ᶜAbd al-Rahman al-Bazzaz. The latter lectured on the cultivation of Arab nationalist feeling through education and other means.[402] Remarkably, both men had been pupils of al-Miqdadi, the former in Palestine and the latter in Iraq, and continued to be his close friends. Al-Bazzaz had also been a leader, alongside al-Miqdadi, of the Arab Rover

[398] "Burrows to Riches, 17/3/1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 100.
[399] *Al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi 1955*, 223; Jeha, 444; Fadil Husain, 247, 260, 263, 300.
[400] *Al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi 1956*, 294-335; Jeha, 442.
[401] *Al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi 1955*, 9, 95.
[402] *Al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi 1956*, 10, 26, 218.

Society, the Muthanna Club, and the paramilitary Youth Brigades, and was imprisoned with him for participating in the Rashid ʿAli Revolt.[403]

Egyptian influence was also apparent within the cultural season. Three out of nine lecturers were Egyptian in 1955 and four out of nine in 1956. Most were government officials: the head of the Egyptian Medical Mission to Kuwait, two educational administrators (apart from Qabbani), and the undersecretary of the Ministry of National Guidance.[404] Furthermore, the senior members of the Egyptian Educational Mission played a prominent role in organizing and moderating the lectures, a point that the British Council's representative noted with concern.[405] As in the case of Kuwait's curriculum, the cultural season thus bore the marks of the three dominant groups within the Educational Department. While it was Husain who conceived of the event, al-Miqdadi and the Egyptian Educational Mission each clearly influenced its content. All contributed to the event's Arab nationalist character, which would persist despite British objections.

Supporting clubs and periodicals was a second method by which the Educational Department under Husain disseminated the culture of the *muthaqqafīn* to broader society. As stated previously, during al-Miqdadi's tenure, the Educational Council assented to the requests of various clubs for monetary support, also supporting local periodicals. These practices expanded greatly following the appointment of Husain as director. The clubs continued to petition the department for assistance, and once a request was granted to one club, the rest demanded equal treatment. By 1954, the department had committed to providing the large clubs (Teachers', al-Ahli, National Cultural, and Graduates') with a wide range of services and allowances. Each was

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[403] Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 167, 169, 240, 242-243, 471; Rabiha al-Miqdadi, 363. Kahati entertains the possibility that al-Miqdadi invited al-Bazzaz to the cultural season. Kahati, "Leading Arab Educators," 527.
[404] *Al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi 1955*, 125, 135, 203; *al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi 1956*, 47, 72, 242.
[405] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1955-1956, 3; *al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi 1956*, 6; *al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi 1955,* 7.

entitled to an annual 15,000 rupee subvention and 2000 rupees per month to cover the costs of a periodical. The department also paid for the clubhouses' rent, electricity, furniture, and various renovations.[406] The Social Guidance Society, Kuwait Sports Union, and a number of less significant sports clubs also received smaller monthly allowances and/or one-time payments.[407]

The Educational Department's oversight of Kuwait's clubs persisted until January 1955, when the newly established Department of Social Affairs took over this responsibility.[408] This did not apply to local periodicals, which the Educational Department continued to support. In 1955, it allocated 1000 rupees per mensem to those clubs publishing weekly newspapers (Graduates', Teachers', and NCC),[409] and granted a 500 rupee monthly allowance to an independent newspaper.[410] In May 1957, the Educational Department finally relinquished its role in subsidizing Kuwait's periodicals in favor of the Press and Publishing Department.[411] By this time, however, the department had already expanded its efforts to enlighten the populace to other areas, which will be detailed in the subsequent chapter.

[406] MEC: S8, 14/6/1954; S5, 21/5/1954; S4, 8/5/1954; S77, 20/12/1953; S75, 17/11/1953; S64, 17/5/1953; S62, 16/4/1953; S59, 24/2/1953; S57, 12/1/1953; S50, 28/10/1952.
[407] MEC: S7, 13/11/1954; S3, 2/10/1954; S78, 5/1/1954; S75, 17/11/1953; S64, 17/5/1953; S62, 16/4/1953; S52, 10/11/1952.
[408] MEC: S10, 22/1/1955.
[409] MEC: S12, 27/3/1955.
[410] MEC: S28, 27/12/1955.
[411] MEC: S44, 29/5/1957.

Chapter Five: The Educational Department in the Arab Nationalist Heyday, 1956-1961

The Suez Crisis marked a turning point in the development of the Educational Department and Kuwaiti politics more generally. The *muthaqqafīn* took over the role of the merchants as leaders of the opposition, and led a popular movement centred on Arab nationalist issues. This included the *muthaqqafīn* at the helm of the Educational Department, most notably ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain. They took advantage of the independence granted to them by Kuwait's decentralized political system and their thorough control over the department to break with state policy and join ranks with the opposition. Not only did the Educational Department directly support oppositional activity in 1956, but it also adopted a more radical nationalist pedagogical agenda. Although the origins of the department's nationalist policies lie in the previous period, the impact of the Suez Crisis caused them to reach unprecedented heights. Bellicose Nasserist rhetoric came to dominate textbooks, classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, and the department's program of popular acculturation. In 1959, however, the rhetoric at an event co-organized by the Educational Department and the opposition proved too aggressive for the ruler's tastes, prompting him to crack down on nationalist activism throughout the country. This led to a decline in Arab nationalist influence within the department. Other developments would have an even greater impact in this regard, namely growing state centralization and the transfer of the department's top cadres to other government institutions.

The Educational Department & the State: An "Island of Arab Nationalism"

The Educational Department's remarkable independence of action during the 1956 events can be accounted for by examining its position within the Kuwaiti state at the time. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* to the department's Arab nationalist environment was to grant the institution a special

character and independence, enabling it to freely implement its nationalist agenda. Unlike Arab expatriates, the *muthaqqafīn* were leaders of a burgeoning opposition movement with strong popular support, and were thus able to stand up to the shaykhs in the institutions under their control. They were aided by the high level of decentralization within the Kuwaiti state in the 1950s, as well as by the support of certain progressive-minded ruling family members. The Educational Department became the primary stronghold of the *muthaqqafīn* within the state. It also served as an incubator for other departments that were initially attached to it, such as Social Affairs and Press and Publishing, which also emerged as bastions of Arab nationalism and progressivism.

Kuwait's Educational Department resembled the "islands of efficiency" described by Steffen Hertog in his study of state formation in Saudi Arabia. Hertog demonstrates that contrary to the "idealized assumptions of state coherence" prevalent in rentier state theory, the modern Saudi state created with the influx of oil wealth in the 1950s was highly decentralized and variegated. This is primarily attributable to the influence of elite decisions. Hertog holds that "oil income… increased the menu of institutional options available to the" Saudi princes, who tended "to add ever more organizations to the state apparatus to address both political and administrative problems." Competing princes carved out their own institutional fiefdoms in which they indulged in corruption and clientelism, but at the same time created autonomous agencies staffed by Western-educated technocrats to handle vital sectors such as oil and state finance.[1] These various government departments function independently and seldom coordinate with one another, and even "operate on different rules and report to different principals."[2]

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[1] Steffen Hertog, *Princes, Brokers, and Bureaucrats* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010), 3-7.
[2] Ibid., 14.

The pre-independence Kuwaiti state resembled that of Saudi Arabia in the extent of its decentralization and variegation. In the 1940s and 1950s, competing ruling family members established control over various departments, with the most powerful "turning administrative fiefdoms into virtual empires."[3] The most prominent of the latter were shaykhs Fahad al-Salim, who headed the departments of Health, Public Works, the Municipality, and the Development Board, and ᶜAbd Allah al-Mubarak, President of the Public Security Department. Both men resisted any external oversight over their departments, and those of Shaykh Fahad were especially notorious for corruption and mismanagement. In the early 1950s, increased oil revenue prompted the British to attempt to increase their control over Kuwait's internal administration through appointing advisers to certain departments. This further divided and complicated the administration, particularly as the aggressively independent Shaykh Fahad engaged in "open warfare" with these British advisers.[4]

The decentralization of the Kuwaiti state gave a great degree of independence to individual departments. In 1961, a leading bureaucrat and *muthaqqaf* described the situation that prevailed throughout much of the 1950s: "Each department was like an independent state within the state, with its own laws, organization, and interpretations."[5] This situation also applied to the departments' finances. As Crystal observes, "each department, financially independent, answered directly to the ruler and received lump sums at his discretion."[6] Pressured by the British, the ruler repeatedly attempted to impose centralized financial control, but largely failed throughout the 1950s.[7] He also sought to create a central government apparatus that could rein in the various departments. In March 1954, he responded to a merchant petition for administrative

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[3] Crystal, 59-65.
[4] Ibid., 68-69; S. Smith, 41-43, 98-99, 139.
[5] Hamad Yusuf al-ᶜIsa, *al-Kuwait wa-l-Mustaqbal* (N.p.: Dar al-Taliᶜa, 1961), 67.
[6] Crystal, 68-69.
[7] "Kuwait Diary, December 24 – January 28, 1957," *Diaries,* Vol. 20, 312-316; "Kuwait Diary, June 26 – July 30," *Diaries,* Vol. 20, 159; "PR to Ross, 16/10/1952," *Diaries*, Vol. 19, 323.

reform by creating the Higher Executive Committee (HEC). Comprised primarily of young shaykhs, it was unable to impose its authority on shaykhs Fahad and ᶜAbd Allah. In December 1955, the ruler replaced it with the Supreme Council, a "protocabinet" that included most of the shaykhs presiding over government departments.[8] It was only gradually that this institution was able to impose a semblance of central authority, a process not completed until after independence in 1961.[9]

As in the Saudi case, the Kuwaiti state's decentralization allowed not only for the creation of shaykhly fiefdoms but also pockets of efficiency and progressivism, most notably the Departments of Education, Social Affairs, and Press and Publishing. In the Kuwaiti case, these institutions were also characterized by strong Arab nationalist influence. This division between departments was obvious to British observers. In 1958 the Political Agent remarked:

> Those Departments which have shaped well from the beginning have gained in experience and efficiency with the passage of time (notably the Departments of Education, Social Affairs, Press and Publishing, Telegraph and Telephones), [while] those which were bad at the start are to-day even worse than before… namely the Public Security and the Public Works Department, and to a lesser extent, the Department of Health.[10]

It is noteworthy that the latter departments were those of shaykhs Fahad al-Salim and ᶜAbd Allah al-Mubarak.

The British also perceived that the more efficient departments were associated with a particular ideological position. In 1960 the Political Agent observed that the Department of Social Affairs "has… prided itself since the earliest days on being, with the Education Department, in the van of the renaissance of 'true Arabism.'"[11] He later elaborated on the Educational Department, describing it as "one of the older established and the more efficient of the Departments of the Kuwait Government":

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[8] Crystal, 71; al-Khatib, 197; FO/371/120550: Bell to Riches, 17/4/1956; Confidential Annex to Kuwait Diary, 23 January – 26 February 1956.
[9] Crystal, 94-96; al-ᶜIsa, 67-68.
[10] FO/371/132757: Halford to Burrows, 5/1/1958.
[11] FO/371/148912: Richmond to Earl of Home, 18/10/1960.

> The Department, like its equally progressive colleague, the Department of Social Affairs and Labour… has a keen sense of public relations… It is not, however, possible to generalize about the Department's standing in Kuwaiti eyes. If a man inclines towards reformist ideas, he will welcome it as a progressive; if he is of a traditional bent of mind (as most Kuwaitis are) he will deplore it as a hotbed of dangerous foreign ideas.[12]

Terms such as "Arabism," "progressive," and "reformist" continually appear in British descriptions of the Departments of Education and Social Affairs.

While the dynamics of state formation in Kuwait resembled those of Saudi Arabia in some respects, there were also crucial distinctions between the two cases, particularly with regards to the influence of the pre-oil legacy and the nature of state-society relations. Hertog argues that the "pre-oil social structures" of Saudi Arabia provided a foundation for the patrimonialist and clientelistic nature of the modern rentier state. Features of the modern Saudi state, such as "patrimonial traditions in the elite, clientelist expectations of new bureaucratic recruits and… the absence of an established distinction between public and private" are all rooted in the traditional socio-political order. At the same time, the "largely illiterate Saudi society offered few potential 'Weberian' bureaucrats to recruit."[13]

Although similar patrimonial tribalism formed part of Kuwait's pre-oil legacy, it was not the only feature. As has been argued, modern institutions inspired by and oriented towards the Arab world emerged in the shaykhdom from the early 1930s, years before the discovery of oil. The Educational Department, presided over by reformist merchants and administered by Arab expatriates, is the primary example. In this case, path dependency served to reinforce the department's efficiency and progressivism in the post-oil period. Sean Yom applies a similar argument to explain the relative liberality of Kuwait's political system after the rise of the rentier state. He contends that the legacy of the 1930s Majlis Movement, which reinforced the traditional pact of

[12] FO/371/162937: Richmond to Earl of Home, 5/1/1962.
[13] Hertog, 15-16.

cooperation between the ruling family and the merchants, led to the emergence of a more participatory system he terms "popular rentierism."[14]

The second key difference between the Saudi and Kuwaiti cases lies in the nature of the relationship between state and society and its impact on the formation of state institutions. In the Saudi case, the royal family was the only force strong enough to shape the state, while other societal groups were incorporated within state institutions as clients or agents.[15] Princes thus created islands of efficiency by giving "their technocratic agents in specific, insulated areas clear incentives to produce efficient outcomes and the authority to bypass the rest of the bureaucracy."[16] Hertog also provides a vital critique of rentier state theory's assumption of "a clear state-society divide,"[17] arguing that societal forces can indeed influence state policy. However, in Saudi Arabia, this influence is limited to the "micro-level" of specific institutions, where clientelistic bureaucrats can obstruct particular policies that they oppose.[18]

In the case of 1950s Kuwait, the *muthaqqafīn* who dominated the state's "islands of efficiency" were not passive, royally appointed agents but the leaders of a flourishing opposition movement with ambitions to control the state. Nor was this a recent phenomenon, for the *muthaqqafīn* were the heirs to the merchants who had forged the Educational Department in the midst of their own opposition movement, and continued to dominate it until the early 1950s. The merchants' role within the bureaucracy declined precipitously after the administrative councils resigned en masse in March 1954, after the ruler refused their demand for an elected advisory council.[19]

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[14] Sean L. Yom, "Oil, Coalitions, and Regime Durability: the Origins and Persistence of Popular Rentierism in Kuwait," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 46, no. 2 (Jun 2011), 218-219, 227-228.
[15] Hertog, 11-17.
[16] Ibid., 29.
[17] Ibid., 7.
[18] Ibid., 20.
[19] FO/371/109810: Logan to Eden, 26/7/1954.

No further elections to these bodies would be held.[20]

While the demise of the councils represented a setback for participatory governance, it probably allowed the *muthaqqafīn* to assert greater control within their departmental strongholds. British observers noted the correlation between the efficiency and progressiveness of particular departments and the extent of the *muthaqqafīn*'s influence. The Political Agent thus states of the Social Affairs Department:

> There exists… in the Department an unusually large proportion of modestly enthusiastic and progressive-minded young Kuwaiti graduates... Because of its active liaison with the educational authorities, the Department has been sure of a cut of the best graduates returning to Kuwait each year.[21]

The Educational Department, moreover, "is well served… by some young Kuwaiti graduates, who are more enthusiastic and less committed to their personal interests than their colleagues in other Departments."[22]

This is not to say that the character and preferences of ruling family members were not important in the formation of "islands of efficiency" in Kuwait. Certain Al Sabah shaykhs had progressive tendencies and ties to the Arab nationalist movement, and thus allowed the *muthaqqafīn* greater freedom in their respective spheres of authority. For some shaykhs, such stances were little more than pretense, as in the case of ᶜAbd Allah al-Mubarak, whose "flirtations with the reformists… never fooled anyone."[23] The progressive views of other shaykhs are widely regarded to have been genuine. Chief among these is the ruler ᶜAbd Allah al-Salim, who presided over the 1938 Legislative Council and adopted an anti-British stance during this period. Contemporaries and academics alike frequently describe him as liberally inclined and/or sympathetic to the Arab nationalists. Examples of this include his toleration of opposition activity, the Arab nationalist mood within the government in the second half

[20] FO/371/132757: PA to FO, 1/4/1958; FO/371/126899: Burrows to FO, 11/10/1957.
[21] FO/371/148912: Richmond to Earl of Home, 18/10/1960.
[22] FO/371/162937: Richmond to Earl of Home, 5/1/1962.
[23] FO/371/140081: FO Minute, Adams, 18/2/1959.

of the 1950s, and especially the constitution and parliament introduced following Kuwait's independence.[24] It is doubtful whether the *muthaqqafīn*'s islands of efficiency could have had the same progressive, Arab nationalist character under a more autocratic, repressive, and pro-British ruler.

Arab nationalist and progressive views could also be found among a group of young shaykhs who became increasingly influential in the 1950s, the ruler relying upon them to counter shaykhs Fahad al-Salim and ʿAbd Allah al-Mubarak.[25] The most prominent was Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad, the ruler's representative in the oil town of Ahmadi and subsequently President of the Finance Department.[26] In the words of the British Political Agent, "he is an Arab nationalist in sympathy and is known to be held in good regard by the reformists."[27] The British considered his brother Sabah to be the most Arab nationalist and pro-Egyptian of the shaykhs. KOC and British officials reported that he had "a strong Arab unity attitude,"[28] and that he "looks and behaves like an effendi."[29] As shall be discussed below, Sabah al-Ahmad would come to head the Social Affairs and Press and Publishing departments, both progressive strongholds of the *muthaqqafīn.*

A final example of a ruling family member with progressive tendencies is Shaykh ʿAbd Allah al-Jabir, President of the Educational Department. Along with the ruler, with whom he was very close, he was one of the few learned shaykhs of the older generation.[30] It will be remembered that he headed the Literary Club in the 1920s and championed female education in the 1930s. His close ties to Egypt began in 1953, when

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[24] Ahmad al-Khatib, Interview by Talal Al-Rashoud, Personal Interview, Kuwait, January 15, 2013; al-Khatib, 111; al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud; Michael Herb, *The Wages of Oil: Parliaments and Economic Development in Kuwait and the UAE* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014), 66, 96-97; Hashim, 109, 291, 480-481.
[25] KOC/106845: Situation Notes, 25 March – 8 April, 1957; Situation Report, 25 January – 2 February, 1957; FO/371/114588: Bell to Fry, 15/8/1955; "Kuwait Diary, June 29 – July 20," *Diaires*, Vol. 19, 617.
[26] FO/371/140081: Outward Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office, 17/2/1959; FO/371/126870: Leading Personalities.
[27] FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 11/2/1959.
[28] KOC/106961: General Manager to Managing Director, 11/5/1957.
[29] FO/371/140081: Internal Situation in Kuwait, Riches, 6/2/1959.
[30] FO/371/126870: Leading Personalities; al-Khatib, Interview by Al-Rashoud.

he made a high profile visit to Cairo and was received by President Muhammad Najib, Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir, and other Free Officers, as well as leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. While there, he was invited to mediate between the two groups. The shaykh also visited the headquarters of the Brotherhood and the state party Hayᵓat al-Tahrir (the Liberation Rally), making donations to both. Both he and his companions also became members of the Rally, and founded a symbolic branch in Kuwait upon returning.[31] Later, the KOC described Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir as "a great admirer and personal friend of Col. Jamal Abdul Nasir."[32]

Although Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir engaged in his share of corruption,[33] this does not appear to have effected his administration of the Educational Department, which the British described as "enlightened."[34] He appears to have handled the department with benign neglect, delegating administration to Husain. The Political Agent thus stated in 1962 that the department "has long been presided over by Shaikh Abdullah al-Jabir as Sabah… and in practice run by Sayyid Abdul Aziz Husain."[35] In 1959, another Political Agent complained that the shaykh's "ambitious, Nasserite Director, Abdul Aziz Husain, disregards him completely."[36] He also lamented that "the Education Department under his presidency has been allowed to run riot in the direction of revolutionary pan-Arabism."[37]

In the absence of centralized control, Kuwait's ever-increasing oil wealth had the effect of augmenting the Educational Department's administrative independence. The department's budget increased exponentially from £2.4 million when Husain took

[31] "Mulhaq al-Biᶜtha al-Khas bi-Ziyarat Raᵓis al-Maᶜarif li-Misr," *al-Biᶜtha*, March 1954, 280-334; "Maᶜ Biᶜthat al-Kuwait," *al-Biᶜtha,* April 1953, 225-228; al-Jabir, Interview by Y. al-Shihab, 212, 216.
[32] KOC/100485: Who's Who.
[33] Crystal, 60; FO/371/126870: Leading Personalities.
[34] Ibid.
[35] FO/371/162937: Richmond to Earl of Home, 5/1/1962.
[36] FO/371/140081: Halford to Lloyd, 11/6/1959.
[37] FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 11/2/1959.

over in 1952-1953 to just over £16 million in 1960-1961.[38] In 1957-1958, the British Council representative observed: "the Kuwait Department of Education by itself spends three times as much as the whole government revenue of Bahrain."[39] The budget increased most dramatically between 1954-1955 and 1955-1956, rising by 79%, and by a further 59% the following year. This increase partly reflects the department's reassertion of control over its building program in 1955-1956,[40] which had been ceded to the Public Works Department in 1953.[41] The Educational Department retained control of this program until it was again transferred to Public Works in 1960-1961. The department's autonomy in this area meant that it was able to build a higher number of schools.[42] These were "some of the best in the world" in terms of facilities and quality of construction.[43] The department even formed its own public parks authority, which was later transferred to the Public Works Department.[44]

The Educational Department's high level of efficiency and ample resources meant that it often took on administrative duties outside its purview. In some cases, this led to the birth of new state institutions that were essentially "offshoots" of the department.[45] The most prominent were the departments of Social Affairs, and Press and Publishing, which also emerged as islands of efficiency and Arab nationalism within the Kuwaiti state. The Educational Department thus effectively exported its ideology to other sectors of the bureaucracy and expanded the domain of the *muthaqqafīn*.

The origins of the Social Affairs Department date to December 1952, when a delegation from the Educational Department led by ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain attended the

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[38] *Taqrir 1961-1962*, 17.
[39] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1957-1958, 5.
[40] *Taqrir 1956-1957,* 11-12.
[41] "Al-Kuwait fi Shahr," *al-Raʾid*, January 1953, 764; MEC: S55, 15/1/1953.
[42] FO/371/162937: Richmond to Earl of Home, 5/1/1962.
[43] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1963-1964, 2; Annual Report, 1960-1961, 5.
[44] ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain, Interview, *al-Anbaʾ*, October 29, 1985.
[45] The term is taken from the British Council's representative, who uses it to describe the Social Affairs Department. BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1956-1957, 4.

Arab League's Social Affairs Conference in Damascus. The delegation subsequently recommended the formation of a social affairs department in Kuwait.[46] In November 1954, the Educational Department created a Social Division comprised of former teachers after the HEC tasked it with creating an agency to oversee foreign workers. The division's head was Hamad al-Rujaib, the former headmaster and close associate of ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain. In early 1955, the HEC upgraded the Social Division to a department.[47]

From the outset, the Arab role within the Social Affairs Department was prominent. A month before forming its Social Division, the Educational Department conducted an agreement with the Arab League for the secondment of technicians to help establish the new department.[48] The Egyptian government seconded an advisor for this purpose in February 1955,[49] and in 1956 several Kuwaiti administrators travelled to Cairo to study the work of the Ministries of Social Affairs and National Guidance.[50] The department's remit quickly expanded from overseeing foreign workers to include various social services, vocational and literacy training, and statistics gathering. It also engaged in more ideologically oriented activities such as supporting clubs, female emancipation, engaging prominent Egyptian playwright Zaki Tulaimat to oversee the development of the local theater, and censoring films including those denigrating "the dignity of Arabism." The Political Agent observed that the department's "inspiration is almost entirely post-revolutionary Egyptian," and marveled that "such an alien plant… has taken so apparently firm a root in arid soil."[51]

A third bastion of the *muthaqqafīn* after the Educational and Social Affairs departments was the Department of Press and Publishing. The roots of this institution

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[46] "Halqat al-Dirasat al-Ijtimaᶜiyya li-l-Duwwal al-ᶜArabiyya," *al-Raʾid*, January 1953, 786-787; MEC: S49, 21/10/1952.
[47] FO/371/114588: Pelly to Eden, 31/1/1955; MEC: S7, 13/11/1954; al-Rujaib, 206.
[48] MEC: S5, 30/10/1954.
[49] "Taqrir Daʾirat al-Shuʾun al-Ijtimaᶜiyya," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, May 21, 955, 10; al-Rujaib, 207.
[50] "Ifad Muwazafi al-Shuʾun al-Ijtimaᶜiyya," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, September 15, 1956, 13.
[51] FO/371/148912: Richmond to Earl of Home, 18/10/1960; al-Rujaib, 213-221.

lie in the idea of publishing an official gazette, which was first proposed by a teacher in 1951 and taken up by Darwish al-Miqdadi. It was intermittently discussed in the Educational Department until September 1954,[52] when the department's financial secretary proposed the idea to the newly established HEC. The HEC approved and made the secretary, Badr Khalid al-Badr, editor of the new publication.[53] At around the same time, the HEC ordered the suspension of all local periodicals until a mechanism for their oversight could be established. It delegated this responsibility to the Educational Department. After studying the issue, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain argued that his department could not adequately deal with this task, and therefore recommended the creation of a separate department.[54]

The Press and Publishing Department was founded in December 1954, and charged with overseeing the official gazette *al-Kuwait al-Yawm* (Kuwait Today), printing government documents, and censoring the local press.[55] The gazette's editor al-Badr recruited other cadres from the Educational Department including the young graduate Fadil Khalaf, who became the publication's secretary,[56] and the former headmaster Ahmad al-Saqqaf, who joined as Assistant Director of the Press and Publishing Department in 1956.[57] The latter is credited with making the department a center of Arab nationalist influence through the recruitment of fellow nationalists, both Kuwaiti and expatriate, including MAN members.[58]

Like the Social Affairs Department, Press and Publishing acquired an Egyptian advisor in 1955 following a visit by al-Badr to Cairo.[59] Employees were also sent to

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[52] MEC: S60, 5/3/1953; S15, 28/1/1952; S12, 14/1/1952; S20, 14/4/1951.
[53] Al-Badr Vol. 2-3, 50-51. Al-Badr's experience while studying in Iraq in the 1920s was discussed previously.
[54] "Kuwait Diary, September 29 – October 25," *Diaries,* Vol. 19, 642; "Kuwait Diary, August 26 – September 28," *Diaries,* Vol. 19, 634.
[55] FO/371/1145745: Pelly to Burrows, 27/2/1955; *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, December 18, 1954, 10; *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, December 11, 1954, 3.
[56] *Al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, December 11, 1954, 3; al-Badr Vol. 2-3, 53.
[57] *Al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, November 18, 1956, 4.
[58] Al-Khatib, Interview by Al-Rashoud; Abu al-Jubayn, Interview by Al-Rashoud; Abu al-Jubayn 275.
[59] *Al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, September 3, 1955, 4.

Egypt for training.[60] Moreover, the department also expanded its activities. In March 1958, it launched two cultural projects designed for the Pan-Arab stage. The first was the printing of classical Arabic manuscripts. The second, more significant endeavor was the publication of a cultural magazine intended for circulation throughout the Arab countries.[61] In late 1957, al-Saqqaf engaged the prominent Egyptian intellectual Ahmad Zaki as its editor.[62] As its title of *al-ᶜArabi* (The Arab) suggests, it was markedly Arab nationalist in tone.[63]

A marker of the *muthaqqafīn*'s control over these departments was that neither had a president until Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad was appointed to head them both in the summer of 1956.[64] According to al-Rujaib, when he heard that Shaykh Fahad al-Salim was seeking to absorb his department into the Municipality, he approached Shaykh Sabah to become its president. Al-Rujaib states that he chose the shaykh because he was the honorary president of the Teachers' Club, and the two men had a close relationship.[65] It was therefore no accident that Shaykh Sabah, with his nationalist views and ties to the *muthaqqafīn*, came to head two of Kuwait's most progressive departments.

The greatest testament to the independence and progressivism of the *muthaqqafīn*'s "islands of Arab nationalism" was the role played by the Educational Department and its offshoots during the Suez Crisis. As shall be seen below, for a certain period, the department would function as a virtually independent entity, more closely aligned with the opposition than the ruling family.

The Suez Crisis and the Educational Department's Politicization, 1956-1959

In July of 1956, the Egyptian President Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir nationalized the Suez

[60] "Al-Nizam al-Jadid li-Daᵓirat al-Matbuᶜat wa-l-Nashr," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, April 21, 1956, 1-2.
[61] "Daᵓirat al-Matbuᶜat wa-l-Nashr: Mashruᶜan Thaqafiyyan," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, March 20, 1958, 1-2.
[62] Al-Badr Vol. 2-3, 56.
[63] Al-Saqqaf, *Tatawwur,* 39.
[64] *Al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, June 9, 1956, 1.
[65] Al-Rujaib, 207-210.

Canal, thus igniting a political crisis that would send shockwaves throughout the Arab world.[66] The impact of these events was acutely felt in Kuwait, where they marked a watershed in local political development. Led by the *muthaqqafīn*, the Arab nationalist movement mounted a series of strikes, demonstrations, and boycotts that represented a more popular and confrontational form of activism unfamiliar in Kuwait.[67] Moreover, while the merchant class traditionally spearheaded opposition to the ruling family, this would no longer be the case. As al-Khatib recalls, the 1956 events inaugurated "a new phase in the history of patriotic activism in Kuwait, in which leadership transferred to the new class of *muthaqqafīn* drawn from all classes: minor merchants, employees, workers, and artisans."[68]

In the face of what was seen as an existential struggle for the Arab nation, the boundaries between state institutions and the opposition movement in Kuwait eroded. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Educational Department, which went much further than other government departments in supporting the grassroots movement. This was made possible by the department's institutional independence, which afforded an almost free reign to its *muthaqqafīn* administration. Cairo's new Arab nationalist line also led to a shift in the attitude of the Egyptian Educational Mission in Kuwait, which now contributed much more to the department's Arab nationalist atmosphere.

The first manifestations of popular support for Egypt in Kuwait occurred during the schools' summer holidays, and the Educational Department was thus not involved. In mid-August 1956, President ʿAbd al-Nasir called for strikes to be held throughout the Arab world to support his country in the face of British and French claims. On August 14th, Lajnat al-Andiyya al-Kuwaitiyya (the Committee of Kuwaiti Clubs [CKC]) convened a "popular conference" at the National Cultural Club in order to plan a

[66] Jankowski, 68.
[67] Al-Khatib, 158.
[68] Ibid., 163.

response.[69] The National Cultural, Teachers', and Graduates' Clubs had formed the CKC in March in order to take a joint position on the contentious issue of importing fresh water from Iraq.[70] Its formation completed the consolidation of the various *muthaqqafīn* factions under the leadership of the MAN, and marked "a more serious co-ordination of the hitherto rather diffuse reformist activities."[71]

The CKC resolved to mount a general strike on August 16th, a decision it upheld even though the public security forces violently dispersed its conference. The strike led to the closure of most shops, but government departments continued to function. The public security forces forcefully put down demonstrations, causing two deaths, numerous injuries, and much damage to property.[72] In response, the CKC sent a message of protest to the ruler,[73] which moved the authorities to adopt a more conciliatory attitude. This became evident in October, when the Liaison Committee of the Arab Popular Conference in Cairo invited Kuwait's ruler to observe a general strike. Its purpose was to protest France's arrest of five leaders of the Algerian National Liberation Front.[74]

With the government's blessing, the CKC and the Educational Department jointly called for a general strike in support of Algeria on October 28th. It was at this stage that the department started to play a major role in supporting the protest movement. Government departments, schools, and the oil company were shut down. Although the government banned demonstrations and gatherings in the clubs, it allowed the CKC and the Educational Department to convene a public meeting at Shuwaikh Secondary School. The department provided school buses to transport the spectators, who

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[69] "Kuwait Diary, July 31 - August 26 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 169; al-Khatib, 137-138.
[70] Khalid al-Masʿud, Interview by ʿIsam al-Jamal, *Rihla fi Raʾs Hadha al-Rajul,* 47; "Burrows to Richards, 19/5/1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 119.
[71] FO/371/120550: Rothnie to Henderson, 10/9/1956.
[72] "Kuwait Diary, July 31 - August 26 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 171-172.
[73] "Kuwait Diary, August 27 – September 24 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 181; al-Khatib, 139-140.
[74] FO/371/120555: Bell to FO, 27/10/1956. The Arab Popular Conference was held in Damascus in September 1956 with the goal of supporting Egypt and was attended by political groups from across the region including the Kuwaiti branch of the MAN. Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 186.

exceeded 4000. Ahmad al-Khatib, two Algerian scholarship students, and Kuwaiti, Palestinian, and Egyptian teachers delivered speeches condemning France and Britain and glorifying the Algerian revolution and Arab nationalism. A resolution was also passed calling for the boycott of French goods. Shaykhs ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir and ᶜAbd Allah al-Mubarak, then serving as Acting Ruler, both attended and made large donations to the Algerian revolutionaries. Boy Scouts also collected donations from the public.[75] The meeting concluded "with the Algerian National Anthem sung by sixteen Algerian students in Boy Scouts' Uniform."[76]

While the Educational Department's initial support of the protest movement was officially sanctioned, popular indignation towards the Tripartite Aggression on Egypt led it to act independently and in opposition to general government policy. After the attacks began in November, the CKC sought government permission for a general strike and demonstration. It first approached the President of the Educational Department, Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir, requesting that students be allowed to participate. The latter sought authorization from the Acting Ruler, Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Mubarak, who resolutely refused.[77] Undaunted, the CKC called for a general strike and demonstration to take place on November 3rd despite police warnings.[78]

The strike succeeded in closing down the markets, though government departments and schools remained open. The CKC also held a mass demonstration that clashed with security forces. At the end of the day, the CKC announced the formation of four subcommittees: one to organize further strikes, another to fundraise for Egypt, a third to enlist volunteers for the Egyptian Army, and a fourth to coordinate an economic boycott of Great Britain and France. The protests forced the government to negotiate,

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[75] "Kuwait Diary, 28 October – 28 November 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 251; FO/371/120555: "Eyewitness Report," KOC, ND; Bell to FO, 29/10/1956; Bell to FO, 27/10/1956.
[76] "Kuwait Diary, 28 October – 28 November 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 251.
[77] Al-Khatib, 157.
[78] "Kuwait Diary, 28 October – 28 November 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 252; KOC/106962: DeCandole to Jordan, 4/11/1956.

and on the same day the CKC's leaders began meeting with the ruler to request government approval for the subcommittees' activities. The ruler agreed to sanction all subcommittees but refused certain demands relating to the boycott, namely the cancellation of government contracts with British companies, the dismissal of British state employees, and the stoppage of oil exports to Britain.[79]

At this point, the Educational Department's role became more noticeable. According to the British Political Agency, representatives of the department were involved in supporting the CKC's demands during these negotiations. Moreover, the CKC's subcommittees were "assisted by many elements in the Department including the Director, Abdul Aziz Husain."[80] At around the same time, the British Council's representative in Kuwait reported that Husain was a prominent figure within the CKC.[81] He later added "the people who were active on these [sub]committees were very largely drawn from the staffs of the Education Department and from its offshoot, the Social Affairs Department and included both Directors."[82] In an interview, Husain recalls participating in the subcommittee in charge of fundraising for Egypt.[83]

Husain's stance during this period is further elucidated by a KOC report, which details a meeting between him and an unnamed British observer in November:

> He noted the very strong pro-Egyptian attitude of the Director, and the very widespread pro-Egyptian feeling throughout the Education Department… Mr. Hussein has come out into the open as one of the leaders of the nationalist anti-Sabah movement in Kuwait… He explained, during the course of the conversation, that in actual fact the clubs and the national movement were the power in the country, and not the Government. In explanation of this statement, he mentioned that the clubs called for a closure of shops, etc., and that although the Government had ordered the shops to open, the shopkeepers preferred to follow the instructions of the clubs.[84]

Other employees of the Educational Department were even more active within the

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[79] "Kuwait Diary, 28 October – 28 November 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 252; al-Khatib, 160-162.
[80] "Kuwait Diary, 28 October – 28 November 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 252.
[81] BW/114/7: Muir to Highwood, 13/11/1956.
[82] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1956-1957, 4.
[83] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain: Sirat Watan wa-Umma fi Sirat Rajul," Interview, *al-Khalij*, June 12, 1996.
[84] KOC/106962: Local Situation Report, 28 November – 4 December 1956.

CKC, serving on the body's coordinating committee. These were the headmasters Khalid al-Masʿud (the CKC's secretary) and ʿAbd Allah Ahmad Husain, and the Assistant Financial Director Khalid al-Khrafi.[85] The Supervisor of Foreign Scholarships Faisal al-Salih is also reported to have played a prominent role in the body at this stage.[86]

The high degree of decentralization within the Kuwaiti state at the time enabled the Educational Department under the *muthaqqafīn* to break with general government policy, participating in the CKC's strikes when other departments did not. Following the success of the strike on November 3rd, the CKC called for it to continue the following day. The strike spread beyond the suq to the schools, several of which closed. The British suspected that this action was taken "with the approval if not on the direct instructions of the Education Department, in which pro-Egyptian and reformist elements play a strong role."[87] The MAN member al-Saddah, who at the time was deputy headmaster of al-Najah Primary School, clarifies that it was the staff of the respective schools who decided to strike. He recalls agreeing on this action with the headmaster of his school, ʿAbd Allah Ahmad Husain. The headmaster and CKC Secretary Khalid al-Masʿud also decided to close his school. Al-Saddah adds that while the Educational Department had no role in this action, it did not object to it.[88] On the same day, however, the department officially sanctioned the strike. The director announced: "In view of the present situation in Egypt all schools will be closed from Monday, 5th November 1956, until further notice." They would remain closed until November 10th.[89] The Educational Department thus became the only government department to observe the strike with the exception of the Electricity Department under

[85] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 183; al-Khatib, 128-129.
[86] KOC/106962: DeCandole to Southwell, 29/11/1956.
[87] "Kuwait Diary, 28 October – 28 November 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 252.
[88] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud; al-Saddah, 16.
[89] KOC/106962: DeCandole to Managing Director, 6/11/1956; "Kuwait Diary, 28 October – 28 November 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 252.

Shaykh Jabir al-ᶜAli al-Sabah,[90] who was personally sympathetic to Egypt at the time.[91]

After the strikes of November came to an end, the CKC focused its efforts on maintaining the activities of its subcommittees, most notably fundraising for Egypt and the economic boycott of France and Great Britain. The Educational Department participated enthusiastically in both these campaigns. In December, it held fundraising drives for employees and students, collecting around 1.3 million rupees for the CKC's Fund for Struggling Egypt. Although many shaykhs donated extensively to this fund at the ruler's request,[92] the Educational Department appears to have been the only government institution to do so.[93] The department also facilitated the activities of the CKC's Boycott Committee by allowing it to hold a large meeting of prominent merchants in one of its schools.[94]

More significantly, the Educational Department became the only government department to cancel its contracts with British companies as demanded by the CKC, a provision that the ruler had earlier rejected. The department sent the following circular to its suppliers in the UK: "Due to the Anglo-French aggressive attack on our Arabian sister country Egypt, we have decided to discontinue our business connections with your organization."[95] In addition, although the department did not go so far as to dismiss its British employees as requested by the CKC, it was reported in November that these employees were not "permitted to attend their offices."[96]

The Educational Department's policy of non-cooperation with British companies and institutions also extended to the field of cultural relations. The British Council's

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[90] KOC/106962: Local Situation Report, 8-13 November 1956.
[91] FO/371/126870: Leading Personalities.
[92] "Qaᵓimat Tabaruᶜat Hadrat Sahib al-Sumu wa-Hadrat Ashab al-Saᶜada Aᶜda al-Usra al-Hakima li-Misr al-Mujahida," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, November 25, 1956, 1; al-Khatib 162.
[93] "Al-Lajna al-Farᶜiyya li-Lajnat Jamᶜ al-Tabaruᶜat li-Misr al-Mujahida," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, December 16, 1956, 1-2.
[94] KOC/106962: Local Situation Report, 5-9 November 1956; "Kuwait Diary, 28 October – 28 November 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 253.
[95] KOC/106962: DeCandole to Managing Director, 2/12/1956; "Kuwait Diary, 28 October – 28 November 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 253.
[96] KOC/106962: Local Situation Report, 8-13 November 1956.

representative commented on the difficulties he faced in dealing with the department after the Suez Crisis, stating "there is no doubt that the Education Department is politically active and hostile to Britain." Writing in the summer of 1957, he added that the department formed "to some extent, an isolated community in which the dark outlook of last November has persisted longer than elsewhere. There is still a great deal of moral pressure on its members not to have dealings with the British."[97] The department demonstrated this attitude during its Boy Scout jamboree in March 1957, to which it invited the various Arab states. During the event, local officials held a meeting with representatives from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Libya, Lebanon, and Tunisia, and decided to collectively boycott the forthcoming jamboree in England.[98]

The Educational Department dealt with the KOC in a similar manner. The company's public relations officials reported that while dealings with many government departments became difficult during the Suez Crisis, the atmosphere in the Social Affairs and Educational Departments was particularly unfriendly. The latter was the last department with which the KOC resumed contact in early December 1956.[99] It took months, however, before the company's relationship with the department returned to normal. When a KOC employee and his guest attempted to visit the Shuwaikh Secondary School in January 1957, the Egyptian headmaster denied them entry "on the grounds that a British visit could not be tolerated."[100] Moreover, the KOC reported in April that visits by schoolchildren to its facilities, which ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain had halted during the crisis, had not resumed "in spite of repeated invitations."[101]

Even after the CKC's fundraising and boycott activities ceased, the Educational Department continued to cooperate with the opposition-dominated clubs in holding

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[97] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1956-1957, 5.
[98] Ibid.,; "Kuwait Diary, 27 February – 25 March 1957," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 362, 364; MEC: S41, 3/1/1957.
[99] KOC/106912: Town Office Monthly Reports, 10 November – 12 December and 8 September – 16 November; 106962: Local Situation Reports, 28 November – 13 December 1956 and 8-13 November 1956.
[100] KOC/106845: DeCandole to Southwell, 7/1/1957.
[101] KOC/106845: Situation Notes, 25 March - 8 April 1957.

Arab nationalist activities in the months and years following the Suez Crisis. For example, the department and the clubs jointly hosted the Egyptian Police and Port Said football teams in January and May of 1957 respectively.[102] In November 1957, the department again allowed the CKC to stage a rally at the Shuwaikh Secondary School to commemorate the start of the Algerian Revolution.[103] As shall be seen, the Educational Department would continue to support the clubs and involve them in its public activities for the rest of the decade.

Education After the Suez Crisis, 1956-1959

The significance of the Suez Crisis in the eyes of the Educational Department's administrators compelled them to engage in activities outside their purview, such as strikes, fundraising, and boycotts. However, the crisis also had a deep and more lasting impact on the educational field. In the months following the strike of November 1956, students were constantly reminded of Egypt and the Arab nation's struggle against imperialism. In a meeting in late November, the Educational Council decided to name a school after Port Said to "commemorate the heroism" of its people in defending Egypt.[104] In December and January, the Boy Scouts collected clothing for victims of the war in Gaza and Jordan with the support of the CKC.[105] In the spring of 1957 ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain was reprimanded, presumably by a leading shaykh, "for allowing a film of the attack on Port Said to be shown to school children."[106] This remembrance of the Suez events was associated with the glorification of Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir. In April 1957, a KOC report observed that "the schools are full of" his portraits.[107] The department also showed solidarity with Nasserist movements elsewhere in the Arab world. In

[102] "Kuwait Diary, 25 April – 29 May 1957," and "Kuwait Diary, 24 December 1956 – 28 January 1957," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 315, 413.
[103] "Kuwait Diary, 24 October – 20 November 1957," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 288.
[104] MEC: S40, 25/11/1956.
[105] KOC/106845: DeCandole to Southwell, 16/1/1957; "Kuwait Diary, 24 December 1956 – 28 January 1957," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 312.
[106] KOC/106845: Local Situation Report, 30 May - 13 June 1957.
[107] KOC/106845: Situation Notes, 8-30 April 1957.

December 1956, "a period of two minutes' silence was observed in some of the schools in honour of those Iraqi students who had been arrested by the government of Nuri Sa^{c}id."[108]

The increase of Arab nationalist sentiment and activism in the schools post-Suez was not merely a short-lived reaction; rather, it represented a turning point in the rise of a more radical and assertive Arab nationalist agenda within the Educational Department. This shift was apparent in the politicization of classroom instruction and extracurricular activities, the increased prominence of Arab nationalism in the curriculum and local textbooks, the department's program of popular acculturation, and the mass meetings held on sports days and nationalist occasions.

Before discussing the Educational Department specifically, it must be emphasized that it was not the only government institution to be caught up in the Arab nationalist fervor that gripped the country after the Suez Crisis. While the Educational Department was undoubtedly the primary bastion of Arab nationalist influence, an increased nationalist mood can be observed within the state as a whole. Examples of this include the establishment of an Israel Boycott Office within the Customs Department in 1957,[109] the launch of a government-sponsored fundraising campaign for the Algerian revolution in 1958, [110] and the official gazette's pronouncements on regional developments.[111] A thorough analysis of nationalist influence across all state institutions in this period is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, this influence can be broadly attributed to developments discussed previously, namely the impact of the popular movement that emerged in 1956, the flirtation with nationalist ideas by certain Al Sabah shaykhs, and the influence of Egyptians, Palestinians, and indigenous

[108] "Kuwait Diary, 29 November – 23 December 1956," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 288.
[109] "Kuwait Diary, July 25 – August 22 1957," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 481.
[110] "Al-Tabaru^{c}at li-Mujahidi al-Jaza$^{\circ}$ir," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, May 4, 1958, 1.
[111] "Al-Jumhuriyya al-Jaza$^{\circ}$iriyya al-Hurra," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, September 28, 1958, 1; "al-Jumhuriyya al-^{c}Arabiyya al-Muttahida," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, February 9, 1958, 1; "Kuwait Diary, July 29 – August 25 1958," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 693-694.

muthaqqafīn in certain departments.

Beyond the overall nationalist mood within the Kuwaiti state, two primary factors can account for the shift towards a more extreme Arab nationalist position in the Educational Department specifically. An obvious cause was the radicalization of its *muthaqqafīn* administrators, led by ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain. A 1957 profile of Husain identifies the Suez Crisis as a turning point after which he "became violently opposed to British policy."[112] While British documents previously described the director as partial towards Egypt, those written after 1956 identify him in much more certain terms as a "Nasserite"[113] and a "fervent Arab nationalist."[114] They also discern the impact of his new ideological stance on department policy. A KOC official thus reports in 1958 that Husain "is endeavouring to make Kuwait a centre for training and discussion of Arab culture and Nationalism."[115] In 1959, the Political Agent accused the director of "[breeding] ill-educated nationalistic perverts" through the educational system.[116]

The second key factor behind the department's more radical tendencies was the unprecedented politicization of its Egyptian teachers and their increasing influence. It is this factor that British sources stress the most, to the point of exaggeration. As detailed above, British fears regarding Egyptian teachers in Kuwait date to the late 1940s and were a key factor behind the establishment of a British Council center in the country. These fears rose to new heights following the Suez Crisis. In the late 1950s, British officials often portrayed the Educational Department and its director as "completely" and "wholly" subservient to Egypt.[117] Moreover, they went so far as to claim that Egyptian teachers indoctrinated and even directed the Kuwaiti activists of the

[112] FO/371/126870: Leading Personalities.
[113] FO/371/140082: Halford to Lloyd, 11/6/1959; FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 11/2/1959.
[114] FO/371/140264: Warr to Bach, 24/6/1959.
[115] FO/371/132757: Southwell to Riches, 12/2/1958.
[116] FO/371/140083: Halford to Lloyd, 13/8/1959.
[117] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1958-1959, 13; Annual Report, 1956-1957, 5; FO/371/126998: Burrows to FO, 1/4/1957; "Persian Gulf Monthly Report, May 1-30 1957," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 407.

clubs, and served as "the most articulate leaders" of the local nationalist movement.[118] A report by the British Council's representative in Kuwait reveals the conspiratorial nature of British fears. He alleged that the Egyptian Educational Missions in the Gulf functioned as a "single unit," controlling local educational departments and even the Baʿth Party.[119] In 1958, the British Political Resident urged the Kuwaiti ruler to restrict Egyptian propaganda in the schools and employ teachers from other Arab countries.[120]

In attributing all Arab nationalist influence in the Kuwaiti Educational Department to Egyptian machinations, the British disregarded the already well-established Arab nationalist tendency within the institution. The more radical nationalist policies of the post-Suez period, while owing much to the rising tide of Nasserism, must also be seen as a continuation of the ongoing efforts of al-Miqdadi and his Palestinian associates and the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn*. As has been stated, it was they who led the department to adopt a curriculum designed to foster Arab nationalist awareness well before Egypt itself. Moreover, the Egyptian teachers' absence from the clubs and underground nationalist groups was conspicuous, and they were not known for their Arab nationalist orientation prior to the Suez Crisis. For example, there is no indication that they played a significant role in the activism that occurred in Kuwait in 1956. British officials at times demonstrated an awareness of this fact, with one of them admitting: "our experience of Egyptian teachers is that they are less troublesome than other foreign Arabs; the Egyptian Government appear to prefer Palestinians and Syrians as their agents rather than their own people."[121]

This is not to say that Kuwait's Educational Department and the Egyptian government did not become very closely aligned in the post-1956 period, and that the influence and activism of Egyptian teachers in Kuwait did not greatly increase. In 1958,

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[118] FO/371/140082: FO Minute, Beaumont, 10/4/1959. See also: FO/371/162937: Richmond to Home, 5/1/1962; KOC/106845: Situation Notes, 8-30 April 1957.
[119] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1958-1959, 13.
[120] "Persian Gulf Monthly Report, April 30 – June 2, 1958," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 629.
[121] FO/371/126998: Given to Walmsley, 11/10/1957; See also BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1956-1957, 1.

ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain declared to a Syrian newspaper that the course of education in Kuwait "is consistent with the sound emancipatory orientation of educational policy in the United Arab Republic," and seeks to imbue the youth with a "strong nationalist spirit."[122] The Egyptian media also spoke of Kuwaiti education in glowing terms. In 1959, the state-owned *al-Jumhuriyya*, mouthpiece of the revolutionary government, published a special issue on the "Educational Renaissance in Kuwait."[123] It's headlines proclaimed: "An Educational Revolution in Kuwait: Arab Nationalism and Unified Arab Homeland at the Heart of Curricula,"[124] and "A Glorious Record of Arab Resurrection (*Baᶜth*): Education in Kuwait Guides the People in an Arab and Humanitarian Direction."[125] The newspaper extolled the cultural ties between Kuwait and the UAR, which were "forging Arab unity in thought and culture,"[126] and praised the shaykhdom as "a stronghold of pure Arabism worthy… of being in the vanguard of free Arabs working for greater Arab unity."[127] In 1960, Cairo's Voice of the Arabs radio station praised Kuwaiti plans to establish a university, adding: "Kuwait has always been the centre whence knowledge and nationalism radiate to the rest of the Arab amirates in the Gulf area."[128]

The marked increase in the Egyptian teachers' influence after 1956 is indicated by the steady rise in their numbers, and the importance of the positions they occupied in comparison to Palestinian teachers. While Egyptian teachers already squarely dominated the secondary level in 1955-1956, by 1960-1961 their percentage increased by a further 15% in the male secondary school and 4.4% in the female, reaching 85.3%

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[122] ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, "Hadith Mudir Maᶜarif al-Kuwait li-l-Faihaᵓ: Risalat al-Taᶜlim al-Muthla fi al-Kuwait," Interview, *al-Faihaᵓ*, August 22, 1958.
[123] The issue is undated but al-Raᵓis dates it to 1959. al-Raᵓis, 13, 245.
[124] "Thawra Taᶜlimiyya fi al-Kuwait, Jawhar al-Manahij: al-Qawmiyya al-ᶜArabiyya wa-l-Watan al-ᶜArabi al-Wahid," *ᶜAdad Khas min Jaridat al-Jumhuriyya ᶜan al-Nahda al-Taᶜlimiyya fi al-Kuwait*, ND, 12.
[125] Ahmad Najib Hashim, "Sijjil Hafil min al-Baᶜth al-ᶜArabi: al-Taᶜlim fi al-Kuwait Yuwajjih al-Shaᶜb Wijha ᶜArabiyya Insaniyya," *al-Jumhuriyya*, ND, 9.
[126] Salah Salim, "al-Taᶜlim fi al-Kuwait li-Kul al-ᶜArab," *al-Jumhuriyya,* ND, 8.
[127] Hashim, "Sijjil Hafil," 9.
[128] FO/371/149140: Transcript, Voice of the Arabs, 13/2/1960.

and 89.7% respectively. The increase came at the expense of Palestinian teachers.[129] Egyptian dominance also soon extended to the new intermediate level, which was added in the academic year 1956-1957.[130] By 1957-1958, the total number of Egyptian teachers in intermediate schools exceeded that of Palestinian teachers.[131] Their proportion increased steadily thereafter at the expense of the Palestinians. The vast majority of Palestinian teachers were thus relegated to elementary schools, and they also dominated the kindergartens.[132]

The increasing intimacy of the relationship between the Educational Department and Egypt was also apparent in other areas. For example, the head of the Egyptian Educational Mission was appointed as one of three delegates representing Kuwait at UNESCO in the 1958-1959 academic year.[133] More significantly, the number of Kuwaiti students studying in Egypt on scholarship increased by a remarkable 61% after the Suez Crisis, from 86 in 1955-1956 to 139 in 1956-1957.[134] Egypt remained by far the most popular destination for Kuwaiti scholarship students throughout the decade, and by 1960-1961 their numbers had risen to 248.[135]

Indoctrination in the Classroom

Influenced by the more radical Arab nationalist line in Cairo, Egyptian teachers in Kuwait became much more active in disseminating Nasserist ideology in the schools. Egyptian domination of the intermediate and secondary schools, where students were more capable of comprehending politics, facilitated this activity. A 1958 issue of the Shuwaikh Secondary School's magazine *al-Yaqza* highlights how Egyptian teachers were able to spread their message among students both in the classroom and through

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[129] *Taqrir 1960-1961*, 283.
[130] *Al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, 17.
[131] *Taqrir 1957-1958*, 93.
[132] *Taqrir 1961-1962*, 282; *Taqrir 1960-1961*, 283; *Taqrir 1959-1960*, 292; *Taqrir 1958-1959*, 170; *Taqrir 1957-1958*, 161.
[133] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1958-1959, 13.
[134] *Taqrir 1956-1957*, 145-146; *al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, 20.
[135] *Taqrir 1960-1961*, 152.

extracurricular activities. For example, the magazine contains excerpts from the newsletters that each class was required to write in coordination with its Arabic teacher. The vast majority of the articles listed are political in nature, and include three on the concept of Arab unity, three on the UAR, two on resistance to colonialism, and one each on Palestine, Algeria, and the Bandung Conference.[136] *Al-Yaqza* adds that the titles of these newsletters "reflect the patriotism and nationalism of the students," and, it may be added, the influence of their teachers. They included: *al-ᶜUruba* (Arabism), *al-Wihda* (Unity), *al-Baᶜth* (Resurrection), *al-Kifah* (Struggle), *al-Taliᶜa* (The Vanguard), and *Jul Jamal* (the name of a martyr of the Suez Crisis).[137]

Al-Yaqza also lists a wide array of student clubs, each overseen by one or more Egyptian teachers. Arab nationalist politics featured prominently in the activities of a number of these, such as the Oratory and Debate Club. Lectures in its program included "Aspects of the Struggle in Algeria," "Wounded Palestine," "Palestine and the Human Conscience," "What the Arabs Will Gain From the Birth of the UAR," and "Our Duty Towards the Nascent UAR." The magazine reports that the headmaster gave one student special commendation for a lecture entitled "Arab Nationalism Past and Present." Members of the club also delivered a weekly program on the school radio entitled "The Arab Maghreb."[138] Another example is provided by the Geography Club, which informs readers that it is working on projects concerning the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conference in Cairo, the Suez Canal, and Arab nationalism and Palestine.[139] The Drama Club, moreover, reports that it is preparing a play for the upcoming celebration of the UAR's anniversary (see below).[140]

The most prominent example of an Arab nationalist extracurricular activity is *al-*

[136] "Muqtatafat min Majalat al-Fusul," *al-Yaqaza*, Vol. 5, 1958, 34-36. No month or issue number listed. All subsequent citations are from the same issue.
[137] "Majalat al-Fusul," *al-Yaqaza*, 32.
[138] "Suwar min Hayat al-Talaba fi Awqat Faraghihim," *al-Yaqaza*, 15-16.
[139] Ibid., 22.
[140] "Al-Talib fi Hiwayatuh," *al-Yaqaza*, 25.

Yaqza itself, which was written and edited by students and teachers at the secondary school. The 1958 issue is saturated with nationalist rhetoric, with the editorial statement reminding students that Arab nationalism is the path to "unity, the ending of colonialism, and the removal of barriers and borders" between Arab states.[141] Its articles cover subjects such the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conference,[142] the Algerian freedom fighter Jamila Buhirad,[143] British colonial policy in Trucial Oman,[144] and the Iranian claim to "Arab Bahrain."[145] It also features a "Girls' Corner," which includes a short story by a female Kuwaiti student that glorifies the Arab commandos fighting Israel.[146] The magazine's final pages are devoted to articles published by the English Club, including the following short piece by a Kuwaiti student:

> We must know the way to acquire independence. It is necessary to start military training to be prepared for struggle. Let us line up hand in hand to face our enemies. Let us depend on our own resources. We will never kneel to ask for mercy. We are aware of imperialists' plans. Our motto will always be, "No despair, no surrender."[147]

Two other English articles also deal with the familiar theme of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conference, indicating the pervasive influence of Nasserism.[148]

It is important to point out that Kuwaiti secondary school students were not merely passive consumers of their Egyptian teachers' propaganda; rather, they actively contributed to the nationalist character of school life. By the late 1950s, years of nationalist education coupled with the growth of the opposition movement in Kuwait led to the emergence of an activist current among secondary school students. This became clear in February 1958, when Baʿthist Kuwaiti students at the Shuwaikh

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[141] "Kalimat al-Tahrir," *al-Yaqaza*, 3.
[142] Muhammad ʿIsa, "Adwaʾ ʿala Muʾtamar al-Shuʿub al-ʿArabiyya al-Ifriqiyya fi al-Qahira," *al-Yaqaza*, 41.
[143] Muhammad al-Hadiri, "Jamila Buhirad Amama al-Mishnaqa," *al-Yaqaza*, 42-43.
[144] Salim al-Humud, "ʿUman Bayn al-Madi wa-l-Hadir," *al-Yaqaza*, 46-47.
[145] Talib ʿArabi, "al-Bahrain al-ʿArabiyya wa-Iran," *al-Yaqaza*, 48-49.
[146] Hissa Muhalhil, "Butulat Fidaʾi," *al-Yaqaza*, 86.
[147] ʿAnbar Mal Allah, "The Way to Freedom," *al-Yaqaza*, 102.
[148] Abdul Majied Khraishi, "The Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity," and Walid Al-Yahia, "War? Or Peace?" *al-Yaqaza*, 104.

Secondary School founded the Kuwait Student Union.[149] The union played a key role in organizing the celebration of the UAR's establishment in February 1958 (see below). Moreover, its president (the Baᶜthist Faisal al-Saniᶜ) and another of its members sat on *al-Yaqza*'s editorial board.[150] Although the union was dissolved along with the rest of Kuwait's clubs in February 1959,[151] student activism continued to develop. By the early 1960s student protests became common and sometimes violent.[152] In 1961 students at the Girls' Secondary School went on strike in support of Algeria "and then assaulted their (Egyptian) headmistress," leading the British Ambassador to remark: "[this] would suggest that it is now the pupils and not the teachers who make the running."[153]

Egyptian teachers by no means held a monopoly over nationalist indoctrination in schools, a point highlighted by the May 1959 issue of the Mutanabbi Intermediate School's magazine. The school's headmaster was the veteran Kuwaiti Arab nationalist ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain.[154] A Syrian teacher edited its magazine. The latter wrote an article on the duty of teachers to "prepare students for life" through offering them guidance on "nationalist, social, and cultural" issues. As an example of this, he cites a classroom discussion on what the Arabs can do to liberate Palestine.[155] Another teacher penned an article entitled "Arab Nationalism Emerged for the Sake of World Peace." Student-authored articles include: "The Joy of the Arabs Over the Unity of the Arabs," "The Duty of Arab Youth Towards Their Homeland," "Arab Nationalism," "Jul Jamal," "The Suez War," and "Palestine." Articles entitled "This is Communism" and "Fortunes and Martyrs in Iraq" reflect the ongoing struggle between Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir and the

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[149] *Tarikh Thanawiyyat al-Shuwaikh 1953-1973* (Kuwait: Wizarat al-Tarbiyya, 2005), 186; Al-Mdairis, *al-Baᶜthiyyun,* 24.
[150] "Usrat al-Tahrir," *al-Yaqaza*, 112.
[151] *Thanawiyyat al-Shuwaikh,* 186.
[152] FO/371/168728: Embassy to FO, 16/4/1963; FO/371/162884: Richmond to Walmsley, 2/12/1962; Al-Mdairis, 266-267.
[153] FO/371/162937: Richmond to Earl of Home, 5/1/1962.
[154] "Taᶜal Maᶜi ila Madrasat al-Mutanabbi al-Mutawasita," *Sawt al-Mutanabbi,* March 1959, qtd. in al-ᶜAbd al-Mughni, 192.
[155] ᶜAbd al-Karim al-Sabbagh, "Maᶜ al-Tulab fi Mashakilihim," *Sawt al-Mutanabbi,* March 1959, qtd. in al-ᶜAbd al-Mughni, 189-192.

Iraqi President ᶜAbd al-Karim Qasim.[156] In a further article, a Kuwaiti student condemns the double standards of Western countries that celebrate Human Rights Day while at the same time conducting oppressive colonial wars in Algeria and Oman.[157] It is highly doubtful that intermediate school students could acquire this level of political awareness without their teachers' concerted encouragement.

It appears that nationalist indoctrination even took place among kindergarten students. In 1959, a journalist for an Egyptian newspaper published an article describing his or her visit to al-Mansur kindergarten, where Palestinian teachers were dominant.[158] The journalist reports visiting a classroom in which the children brandished toy rifles and chorused: "Oh Jews I will destroy you, and with my weapon I will show you, I will erase your country with my hand, and bring victory to Arabism over you." In a second classroom, students sang an anthem beginning with the following lines: "I am the mighty genie who has emerged from the bottle, to destroy France and Britain, and defeat Israel, I am Arab nationalism!"[159] While this display may have been staged or exaggerated by the journalist for propaganda purposes, it nevertheless suggests that very young students were not isolated from the more radical Arab nationalist spirit permeating the schools.

Arab Nationalism in the Curriculum

The Suez Crisis occurred shortly after the Educational Department began to develop its first national curriculum for the primary and intermediate levels on the basis of the Qabbani-ᶜAqrawi report. While this report was the direct stimulus behind the adoption of Arab nationalist guidance as a goal of education, it is also highly probable that the atmosphere generated by the Suez Crisis served to reinforce the curriculum's

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[156] Al-ᶜAbd al-Mughni, 181-182.
[157] ᶜAdil al-Mutawwaᶜ, "al-Ihtifal bi-Huquq al-Insan," *Sawt al-Mutanabbi,* March 1959, qtd. in al-ᶜAbd al-Mughni, 196.
[158] *Taqrir 1958-1959,* 32.
[159] "Atfal al-Qawmiyya al-ᶜArabiyya," *Watani,* March 29, 1959, 7.

Arab nationalist character. The Educational Department first began to provide a systematic outline of its new curriculum and its method of promoting Arab national awareness in its annual report for 1956-1957, which was far more substantial than previous reports. The report's format and contents changed little throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s. The document makes it clear that the goal behind introducing the new curriculum is to achieve a "balance between… the system followed by the Arab countries generally and the features of the Kuwaiti environment specifically." This balance facilitates learning while at the same time enabling the educated to "live up to the ideals of Arab nationalism." It was to attain this goal that the advice of the Qabbani-ᶜAqrawi committee was sought.[160]

The report states that the new curriculum gives increased attention to "the nationalist aspect" on the primary level.[161] However, it is on the intermediate level that the majority of nationalist inculcation takes place. The report affirms that this level "pays special care to a category of knowledge that feeds [the student's] Arab spirit and Islamic sentiment, evokes his [past] glories, and connects him to his Arab world spanning all [Arab] states."[162] The time devoted to the subjects of history and geography therefore increases at this level, and the subject of civic education is introduced for the first time. The document points out that while the curriculum is generally modeled on that of Egypt, the history, geography, and civic education curriculums "have virtually been rewritten."[163] The report goes on to clarify the purpose of these three subjects:

> [They] aim to acquaint the student with the environment in which he lives and elucidate the key features of the history of the Arab nation from the most ancient times to the present, thus making him aware that he is a member of society with duties and rights.[164]

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[160] *Taqrir 1956-1957,* 19-20.
[161] Ibid., 34.
[162] Ibid., 21.
[163] Ibid., 59-60.
[164] Ibid., 59.

The society in question is both the Kuwaiti *waṭan* and the Arab umma, for the report states that the student's own country should be the "starting point" for the study of his broader nation.[165]

The new wave of locally authored textbooks that the Educational Department began to compose in 1955-1956 reflected the curriculum's nationalist goals. The same committee of inspectors in charge of preparing the primary and intermediate curriculums also wrote these textbooks, seventeen of which were completed by the end of the academic year.[166] From 1957-1958, the department's annual reports began to publish lists of textbooks used in Kuwaiti schools.[167] Although these lists do not provide complete information regarding authorship,[168] it appears that the majority of authors were Egyptian. This reflects the fact that the vast majority of the department's inspectors, including the inspector of social studies, were Egyptian. The lists also reveal that the previous series of local textbooks published from 1953 were abandoned. Unfortunately, only one example of the new wave of textbooks could be obtained. However, this civic education textbook illustrates the extent of Arab nationalist influence within the new curriculum. Furthermore, it has both Egyptian and Kuwaiti authors, confirming that Kuwaiti educators participated in articulating this Arab nationalist message.

Mudhakkirat al-Tarbiyya al-Wataniyya li-l-Sana al-Rabiᶜa al-Mutawasita (Civic Education Aides-Memoires for the Fourth Intermediate Year) presents a much more emphatic and radical Arab nationalist message than previous local textbooks. It was published in either 1955-1956 or 1956-1957.[169] Its authors were ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz

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[165] Ibid., 60.
[166] *Al-Kuwait wa-Nahdatuha 1955-1956*, 18.
[167] *Taqrir 1957-1958,* 227-243.
[168] The annual reports for 1957-1958 and 1958-1959 list only primary authors for works with multiple authors. Reports between 1959-1960 and 1961-1962 provide no information regarding authorship.
[169] The copy consulted does not list a publication date, but a handwritten inscription states that it was gifted to the Public Library of Zubair in Iraq in July 1957. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Hindawi, Uthman Faiz Allah,

Hindawi, an Egyptian secondary school teacher, ʿUthman Faiz Allah, the Egyptian Inspector of Social Studies, Ibrahim al-Shatti, a young Kuwaiti secondary school teacher and graduate of Egypt, and ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain. The book is composed of four disconnected chapters linked by the themes of Arab nationalism, progressivism, and anti-imperialism. The first covers the concept of *waṭanīyya* or patriotism, arguing that it is based on the following principles: "trust in the nation's present and future," "mutual trust among the people," "social awareness," and "patriotic brotherhood."[170] The "Arab youth" is also instructed that patriotism requires that he "be proud of his Arabism and his nationality, and maintain Arab customs and traditions."[171]

The second chapter entitled "Enlightened Public Opinion" argues for a progressive socio-political order that would have been revolutionary within the Kuwaiti context of the time. It starts by establishing a dichotomy between "enlightened" and "un-enlightened" public opinion:

> If public opinion is subordinated to obsolete customs and harmful old traditions, and is no longer compatible with modern conditions and the progressive [*taqadumīyya*] life, it is said to be unenlightened. Examples include not allowing girls to work in teaching or any occupation outside the home, and groups that prevent women from entering politics and deprive them of their right to vote.[172]

It should be kept in mind that women in Kuwait would not gain the right to vote until around fifty years after this was written. The chapter also holds that the functions of enlightened public opinion are to prevent the tyranny of rulers, allow for the functioning of parliamentary life, hold rulers accountable, and ensure that the people within a democracy use their freedom responsibly. The text states that those in developing countries where public opinion is unenlightened should not be deterred from "trying to implement democratic rule." In these cases, it falls to the "cultured, enlightened class [*al-ṭabaqa al-muthaqqafa al-mustanīra*]" to pursue democracy until the rest of the

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Ibrahim al-Shatti, and ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain, *Mudhakkirat al-Tarbiyya al-Wataniyya li-l-Sana al-Rabiʿa al-Mutawasita* (Kuwait: Maʿarif al-Kuwait).
[170] Ibid., 8-16.
[171] Ibid., 16.
[172] Ibid., 21-22.

populace can be made aware.[173] This statement has a subversive air given that Kuwait possessed no representative institutions at this stage. Moreover, it clearly encourages the sense of mission and cultural superiority held by the *muthaqqafīn*.

The second chapter concludes with a discussion of methods for cultivating enlightened public opinion, foremost of which is state education. On the level of the curriculum, "studying the nationalist movements and the biographies of the leaders [*zuᶜamāᵓ*] who served their countries instills within the youth love for their country and the dedication to serve it."[174] Just as important are extracurricular activities. One of the examples provided is the Educational Department's own annual cultural season.[175] The textbook also refers to the department's efforts to use the cinema "for fostering national awareness."[176] The department's Arab nationalist and progressive agenda is thus made clear.

The "Arab Homeland" is the title of the third chapter, which focuses on Arab unity. It proclaims that the Arabs form "a nation of 90 million with a common origin, language, civilization, and history," and that if "our nation unites and arms itself, it can regain the glory of the past and control the balance of power between East and West for the benefit of all humanity."[177] Most of the chapter deals with the impediments to unity, including lack of education and the "reactionary [*rajᶜīyya*] influences" that repress women.[178] However, it is "foreign colonialism" that poses the major challenge. This began with the Ottoman Turks who were then supplanted by the Europeans. Although many Arab countries have won their independence, three main areas remain under

[173] Ibid., 23-24.
[174] Ibid., 25.
[175] Ibid., 26.
[176] Ibid., 30.
[177] Ibid., 56.
[178] Ibid., 54.

colonial rule: Palestine, North Africa, and "the southern and eastern Arabian Peninsula."[179]

The colonial threat in Palestine is portrayed as the most serious given the strength of the Zionist entity and its expansionist ambitions. Regarding the Maghrib, the text argues that its independence is only a matter of time because "the chains of colonialism have been broken… in the western part of North Africa." Signs of this can already be seen in Tunisia and Morocco, while the liberation struggle in Algeria has reached new heights.[180] Although the chapter does not elaborate on the situation in the eastern Arabian Peninsula, the mere mention of colonialism in this region is surprising given Kuwait's continued ties to Great Britain. The chapter is also careful to incorporate Kuwait into the discussion at various points, referring to it as a "small part of the Arab homeland."[181]

The fourth chapter, finally, deals with the Arab League. This organization is portrayed as the end result of "the Arab's struggle for unity" and the spread of national awareness since Ottoman times. This struggle intensified after the Second World War, leading the Arab countries to seek greater coordination and unity through the formation of the Arab League.[182] Its birth in 1945 represented "a new page in the progress of the Arab nationalist movement, and it thus became the focus of every Arab's hopes to liberate the Arabs and enable them to assume their proper position in the procession of civilization."[183] The chapter holds that one of the Arab League's goals is to help those Arab countries that remain colonized such as Palestine, parts of North Africa, and the Gulf emirates, "all of which have expressed their desire for liberation and deliverance from the shackles of colonialism."[184] The chapter's final pages highlight the League's

[179] Ibid., 57.
[180] Ibid., 57-58.
[181] Ibid., 51.
[182] Ibid., 60-63.
[183] Ibid., 63.
[184] Ibid., 65-66.

efforts with regards to Palestine, particularly the Arab economic boycott of Israel.[185] This textbook illustrates the boldness and forcefulness of the Educational Department's efforts at nationalist inculcation in the post-Suez period.

On the secondary level, where the curriculum in use was still that of Egypt, the Educational Department appears to have introduced Arab nationalist guidance into this curriculum through modifications to the subjects of history and geography.[186] Though the department's annual reports provide little information regarding these modifications, the lists of textbooks used in secondary schools reveals the material used to inculcate Arab nationalism. One text, which was probably a supplement to the Egyptian curriculum,[187] is *Qissat al-Wihda al-ᶜArabiyya (The Story of Arab Unity)* by Anwar al-Sadat. It was assigned to year three students on the literary (*adabī*) track.[188]

This highly polemical work argues in favor of Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir's project of Arab defense cooperation and positive neutrality, and inveighs against the colonial, British-inspired Baghdad Pact. Al-Sadat supports his arguments with examples from history and current affairs, his recollections of diplomatic visits and meetings, analysis of British newspaper articles, and even *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Moreover, the book is interspersed with vitriolic attacks on the Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Saᶜid and Jordan's King Husain, not to mention Great Britain, Israel, and the USA.[189] Particularly noteworthy for a textbook used in Kuwait are the scattered condemnations of British policy in the Gulf, from the treaties of protection that fragmented the Arabs of the region to the recent Buraimi dispute.[190] Twice, al-Sadat commends the action of a

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[185] Ibid., 66-68.
[186] The subject of civic education was not taught on the secondary level.
[187] There are a number of indications that this book was not part of the original Egyptian curriculum. Firstly, as has been stated, the Egyptian secondary school curriculum did not acquire an Arab nationalist character until after the establishment of the UAR in 1958. Secondly, the text is only in the list of textbooks featured in the Kuwaiti Educational Department's annual report for the year 1957-1958, indicating that it was not permanently included within the curriculum. Finally, nothing within the text itself, which was published by *al-Hilal* magazine, suggests that it was intended for use in schools.
[188] *Taqrir 1957-1958,* 235.
[189] Anwar Sadat, *Qissat al-Wihda al-ᶜArabiyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1957).
[190] Ibid., 63, 73, 94, 115, 210.

mob in Bahrain that attacked the motorcade of the visiting British foreign minister in March 1956. He also alludes to a plot to encourage foreign (presumably Iranian) immigration to the islands to "eliminate Arab nationalism there."[191]

In the academic year 1960-1961, Kuwait's Educational Department began assigning locally authored history and geography textbooks for the first year of the secondary level.[192] Unfortunately, these were not available for analysis. In the same report, the department stated its intention to undertake a more comprehensive adjustment of the secondary curriculum,[193] but this was not implemented until later in the 1960s.[194] As the decade wore on, a national secondary school curriculum came to gradually replace that of Egypt, but this development is beyond the scope of this study.[195]

Popular Acculturation

Yet another area in which the Educational Department's more extreme Arab nationalism became apparent was its program of popular acculturation, which developed significantly from its inception in the early part of Husain's tenure. The department oversaw an increasing number of events and projects by which it sought to cultivate a cultural field beyond the classroom. For example, in 1958 it opened a temporary national museum, and started planning a permanent museum in conjunction with a UNESCO adviser.[196] However, the most important initiatives for disseminating Arab nationalist ideology were the cultural season, the Literary Association, and the 1958 Arab Men of Letters Conference.

The cultural season, which the Educational Department had hosted annually since 1955, continued to be the cornerstone of popular acculturation. Such was its popularity

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[191] Ibid., 85, 95.
[192] *Taqrir 1960-1961*, 299.
[193] Ibid., 21.
[194] *Al-Taqrir al-Sanawi li-l-ᶜAm al-Dirasi 1963-1964* (Kuwait: Wizarat al-Tarbiyya), 26-27.
[195] *Al-Taqrir al-Sanawi li-l-ᶜAm al-Dirasi 1968-1969* (Kuwait: Wizarat al-Tarbiyya), 9.
[196] *Taqrir 1957-1958*, 220.

that during the 1957 season "large crowds… filled the hall of the secondary school to overflowing,"[197] and in 1958 the hall, "capable of holding about 2,500 people… [was] filled to capacity."[198] Female attendance was also significant.[199] As in the previous cultural seasons, Arab nationalism formed the central theme. In 1957, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain opened the event by alluding to the Suez Crisis and its contribution to the advancement of Arab national unity and liberation, and pointed to the cultural season's role in reinforcing national awareness.[200] He employed similar rhetoric in subsequent years.[201] In 1958 the Political Agent noted that it had become "the accepted and inevitable norm" for Educational Department officials to punctuate the lectures with "passing reference to the political themes of Arab unity and anti-imperialism."[202] A British Council report from the same year added that "pamphlets on British atrocities were freely distributed to the audiences."[203]

The choice of lecturers and topics also reflected the department's Arab nationalist agenda. From 1957, the season's organizers "made a conscious effort… to invite speakers from all parts of the Arab world."[204] That year, participants hailed from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, and Egypt.[205] It was intended for Tawfiq al-Madani of Algeria's National Liberation Front to speak at the 1958 season, but for some reason this did not occur.[206] Former Red Book Group members also continued to participate, suggesting the persistence of al-Miqdadi's influence. These were Munif al-Razzaz, a leader of Jordan's Baᶜth Party who gave two lectures on nationalism in 1957,[207] and the

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[197] "Kuwait Diary, December 24 1956 – January 28 1957," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 312.
[198] "Kuwait Diary, December 24 1957 – January 27 1958," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 571.
[199] Suᶜad al-Rifaᶜi, *Mudhakkarati* (Kuwait: 2011), 108.
[200] *Muhadarat al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi al-Thalith 1376/1957* (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait).
[201] *Muhadarat al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi al-Khamis 1378/1959* (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait); *Muhadarat al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi al-Rabiᶜ 1377/1958* (Kuwait: Maᶜarif al-Kuwait), 11.
[202] "Kuwait Diary, December 24 1957 – January 27 1958," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 571.
[203] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1957-1958, 5.
[204] "Kuwait Diary, December 24 1957 – January 27 1958," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 571.
[205] *Mawsim 1957*, 1, 47, 113, 175, 247.
[206] "Bayan: al-Mawsim al-Thaqafi al-Rabiᶜ li-ᶜAm 1958," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, December 29, 1957.
[207] *Mawsim 1957,* 175-211; Jeha, 438; Betty Anderson 62, 137.

Palestinian Burhan al-Dajani, who spoke about "Arab Economic Unity" in 1958.[208]

It is noteworthy that two speakers lectured on the role of education in fostering Arab national awareness: Jamil Saliba of the Syrian University in 1958,[209] and the Egyptian educator Muhammad Fuʾad Jalal in 1959.[210] It will be remembered that this was also the subject of previous lectures by ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Bazzaz in 1956 and Ismaʿil Qabbani in 1955. The prominence of this topic in the cultural season may reflect the Educational Department's own ongoing efforts in this field. The cultural season also provided the department with an opportunity to further the cause of female emancipation. In 1957, the Egyptian literature professor ʿAʾisha ʿAbd al-Rahman (known by the pen name Bint al-Shatiʾ) "made history in Kuwait by being the first woman to lecture in public."[211] Female participation continued in all seasons thereafter.[212]

An important activity related to the cultural season was Mahrajan al-ʿUruba al-Fanni (The Arabism Arts Festival), which was held on the margins of the 1958 season. The centerpiece of the event was a play entitled *al-Wihda al-Kubra (Greater Unity)*, which celebrated the creation of the UAR. The play was written by Ahmad Abu Bakr Ibrahim, one of the department's Egyptian inspectors, and directed by the prominent Egyptian playwright Zaki Tulaymat, who had also spoken at the cultural season. The actors were students, particularly from the Drama Club at Shuwaikh Secondary School. The play featured an unprecedented traditional dance performance by schoolgirls, whose appearance before a male audience was hitherto considered taboo.[213] This arts festival suggests that the Educational Department may have intended to broaden the scope of the cultural season. However, it did not have the opportunity to do so. The

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[208] *Mawsim 1958,* 253.
[209] Ibid., 309.
[210] *Mawsim 1959,* 1.
[211] "Kuwait Diary, January 29 – February 26 1957," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 346.
[212] *Mawsim 1959,* 43; *Mawsim 1958,* 149.
[213] Sayyid ʿAli Ismaʿil, "al-Wihda al-Kubra: ʿArd Masrahi Kuwaiti Majhul Mundhu ʿAm 1958," *al-Kuwait*, May 2010, 64-68; "al-Talib fi Hiwayatuh," *al-Yaqaza*, 25.

1959 cultural season was cut short by a government crackdown, and the event was discontinued thereafter.[214]

A second element of the Educational Department's program of popular acculturation was the establishment of al-Rabita al-Adabiyya (The Literary Association) as an independent club in May 1958. The department had previously contributed to the cultural activities of the *muthaqqafīn* by subsidizing the clubs. Now, Husain and his administration cooperated directly with the clubmen, building on the close relationship they had developed during the 1956 protests. The Literary Association was Husain's brainchild, yet he established it in coordination with MAN, Baʿthist, and independent Arab nationalist elements, including a substantial number of Arab expatriates.

The Literary Association's diversity was reflected in the association's board, which included ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain as secretary general and the MAN headmaster ʿAbd Allah Ahmad Husain as secretary. The remaining board members were the director's close associate Ahmad al-ʿAdwani, the Egyptian inspector Ahmad Abu Bakr Ibrahim, the independent Fadil Khalaf, the MAN member ʿAbd al-Razzaq al-Basir, and the South Arabian Baʿthist ʿAli ʿAqil. Other members included the MAN cadres Muhammad al-Saddah (a Kuwaiti headmaster), Ghassan Kanafani (a Palestinian teacher), and Salam Ahmad (an Iraqi), and the Baʿthists Hamad Yusuf al-ʿIsa and the Palestinian Naji ʿAlush. The association's goals included: "steering Arabic literature in a nationalist direction beneficial to emancipatory Arab ideology in all areas of the Arab homeland," and its bylaws restricted membership to Arabs who espoused Arab nationalism.[215]

ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Husain created the Literary Association as part of a plan to host Muʾtamar al-Udabaʾ al-ʿArab (the Arab Men of Letters Conference) in Kuwait in December 1958. The association's bylaws stated that it "should be linked with the

[214] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1958-1959; *Mawsim 1959*.
[215] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 206-207; al-Hatim, 476-477; al-Saddah, 20-21.

permanent office of the Conference of Arab Men of Letters."[216] Husain had led the Kuwaiti delegation to this annual conference when it was held in Cairo in December 1957. There, he extended an invitation from Kuwait's ruler to hold the next year's conference in Kuwait. Husain was then elected, along with his co-delegate al-ᶜAdwani, to the conference's permanent office.[217] The Literary Association played an active role in hosting this conference in Kuwait in conjunction with the Educational Department.[218]

In the 1958 Arab Men of Letters Conference, the Educational Department's efforts to promote Arab nationalism on the public, transnational, and educational levels intersected. The conference's program, which the department planned in cooperation with Egypt's cultural authority, centered on the theme of "Heroism in Arabic Literature."[219] Fourteen delegations numbering 200 persons attended from across the Arab world,[220] and included anti-colonial parties. The President of the South Arabian League Muhammad ᶜAli al-Jifri represented South Arabia,[221] and the Imamate's envoy to Cairo Muhammad ᶜAmin ᶜAbd Allah (also a leader of the Omani Union party) spoke for Muscat and Oman.[222]

Kuwait's twenty five-member delegation to the conference was also remarkably diverse. It included Kuwaiti, Egyptian, and Palestinian employees of the Educational Department, and to a lesser extent the departments of Press and Publishing and Social Affairs. A noteworthy representative of the latter department was the Bahraini oppositionist ᶜAli Sayyar, then in exile in Kuwait. Almost all of the Literary Association's board members also participated in the delegation, in addition to a significant number of educated merchants including the nationalists al-Nisf and al-

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[216] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 206-207.
[217] *Muʾtamar al-Udabaʾ al-ᶜArab* (Cairo: Mitbaᶜat Misr, 1957), 58, 299-300, 316.
[218] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 207; al-Saddah, 21.
[219] *Taqrir 1958-1959*, 258.
[220] FO/371/140260: DeCandole to Riches, 5/2/1959.
[221] *Muʾtamar al-Udabaʾ al-ᶜArab: al-Dawra al-Rabiᶜa* (Kuwait: Matbaᶜat Hukumat al-Kuwait, 1958), 660.
[222] Ibid., 659.

Sani^{c}.[223]

The conference was highly politicized and saturated with Arab nationalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric. Even before the event started, "posters were put up everywhere… stressing Arab Unity [and] anti-Shu'ubiya."[224] As Secretary General of the conference, ^{c}Abd al-^{c}Aziz Husain delivered the opening speech. He compared historic Arab heroism to the current "struggle of the Arab people to realize its nationalist creed, which aims towards unity and liberation."[225] He elaborated:

> Our battle with colonialism and Zionism is ongoing, and the blood of our martyrs in Palestine has not yet dried, and still exhorts us to take vengeance. Our martyrs in Oman and the Southern [Arabian] Peninsula continue to fall in the face of colonial bullets, just as their brothers did at Port Said, and the flames of revolution still blaze in Algeria.[226]

The headmaster ^{c}Abd Allah Ahmad Husain also welcomed guests "to this segment of the Arab homeland," and called for "comprehensive Arab unity that will demolish the distinguishing marks of existing [political] entities."[227] Later, the Kuwaiti teacher Salih al-Shihab recited a colloquial Kuwaiti poem dating to the Second World War, which attacked British colonialism in Arab nationalist terms and longed for a Nazi victory.[228]

The event was marked by hostility between Arab nationalists and communists, a symptom of the dispute between the Egyptian and Iraqi leaders that then overshadowed regional politics. The proceedings were interspersed with heckling and scuffles, at one point necessitating police intervention. The Iraqi delegation was angered by the hostile reception it received from other delegates, the audience, and the local press. It eventually withdrew from the conference, condemning the meeting and ^{c}Abd al-^{c}Aziz Husain personally as "[tools] of imperialism and the oil companies."[229] The conference concluded by issuing a number of resolutions, many of which were political. Some

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[223] Ibid., 660.
[224] FO/371/140260: DeCandole to Riches, 5/2/1959.
[225] *Mu^{3}tamar al-Udaba^{3}: al-Dawra al-Rabi^{c}a*, 73-74.
[226] Ibid.,.
[227] Ibid., 263.
[228] Ibid., 521.
[229] FO/371/140260: DeCandole to Riches, 5/2/1959.

condemned the aggression of the Zionists in Palestine, the French in Algeria, and the British in South Arabia. Others protested the mistreatment of POWs in Oman, "affirmed the Arabness of Bahrain" in the face of Iran's claim to the islands, and denounced the British-backed "colonial" federation in South Arabia.[230]

Finally, the department held a number of "auxiliary activities" reflecting the theme of Arab heroism. These included performances by Cairo's National Theater and a special showing of the Egyptian film *Jamila*, which depicted the eponymous heroine of the Algerian revolution.[231] More significant was the Arab Heroism art exhibit for students, which added an educational dimension to the conference's activities. The British Council representative derided the artwork as "mostly crude and brutal political cartoons."[232] Paintings depicting armed resistance in Algeria, Palestine, and the Suez Canal were intermixed with battle scenes from Islamic and Kuwaiti history. Stylized portraits of Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir and Jamila Buhirad were common. Other works contained more symbolic representations of Arab unity and anticolonial struggle.[233]

Nationalism on Display: Sports Days and Celebrations

The Educational Department displayed its Arab nationalist colors most conspicuously in the mass meetings it held at the Shuwaikh Secondary School stadium during its annual sports days and celebrations of the UAR. So bold and blatant were these events that the last of them provoked the ruler to sharply curtail the department's nationalist activities and crack down on Kuwait's nationalist opposition as a whole. This is another area in which the department's public and educational roles intersected. While clubs often assisted the department in organizing these meetings, students took center stage in the performances.

While there is no evidence that the school sports days in the first half of the 1950s

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[230] *Muʾtamar al-Udabaʾ: al-Dawra al-Rabiʿa*, 539-541.
[231] FO/371/140260: DeCandole to Riches, 5/2/1959; *Taqrir 1958-1959*, 258.
[232] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1958-1959, 2.
[233] *Maʿrad Musabaqat al-Butula al-ʿArabiyya* (Kuwait: Maʿarif al-Kuwait, 1958).

were political, the first such event held after the Suez Crisis in May 1957 was described by a KOC official as "nearer in character to a military rally than a sporting event." Involving 2,100 students and 11,000 spectators, the event featured young boys armed with air rifles marching to Arab nationalist anthems. A variety of parade floats depicted nationalist themes. One featured Egyptians shooting down British paratroopers at Port Said, another the Arab states liberating Palestine, and a replica of a tank signified Algeria's independence struggle. A fourth float represented the defeat of Israel at the hands of Arab soldiers, complete with a captive David Ben Gurion. The Arab heroes Salah al-Din and Harun al-Rashid appeared alongside Egyptian Pharaohs and scenes from Kuwaiti history.[234] The Egyptian and Kuwaiti identities were thus interwoven within a larger Arab nationalist fabric.

The establishment of the UAR on February 1st 1958 provided another annual occasion that the Educational Department celebrated by holding mass meetings. A day after unity between Egypt and Syria was announced, the newly renamed Union of Kuwaiti Clubs (UKC)[235] in conjunction with the Kuwait Student Union organized a public rally at the Shuwaikh Secondary School. It is unclear to what extent the Educational Department was involved in planning this event, but the participation of an Egyptian inspector and the superintendent of technical affairs, a Syrian, lent the event official sanction. A Kuwaiti teacher spoke on behalf of the UKC. The event featured students and delegations from various clubs parading around the stadium with banners, and was noteworthy for the unprecedented participation of female students.[236] Moreover, it revealed that three years after the Suez Crisis, ties between the Educational Department and the opposition movement remained strong.

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[234] FO/371/126899: Southwell to Riches, 17/5/1957.

[235] In February 1958, the CKC was refashioned as the UKC as part of an effort to strengthen its organization. al-Saddah, 19: Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 205.

[236] "Mahrajan Ittihad al-Andiyya wa-l-Talaba wa-l-Shaᶜb," *al-Yaqaza*, 68-74; ᶜAbd Allah Hashish, "Milad al-Jumhuriyya al-ᶜArabiyya al-Mutahida," *al-Yaqaza*, 61; "Muqtatafat min Majalat al-Fusul," *al-Yaqaza*, 35.

The celebration of the UAR was followed only a month later by the 1958 sports day, which proceeded on similar lines to that of the previous year. The British Political Agent noted that it included "gymnastic displays on familiar Egyptian/Hitler Youth lines," and floats with "historical and political scenes." The event was also the first of its kind to feature performances by schoolgirls, indicating the department's increasingly progressive attitude.[237] As a finale, "a mock attack on an Israeli frontier post was staged most realistically with smoke bombs and bangs. At the conclusion of the attack, the Israeli prisoners were lined up and shot." When ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain asked the British Political Agent his opinion on the display, the latter expressed "his disgust that hatred and a grave offence against international law should be officially taught to Kuwaiti children."[238] The Political Agent's outburst drew criticism from the Kuwaiti press. Even Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Mubarak, then serving as Acting Ruler, made the following comment to a local newspaper:

> The fellow behaved extremely badly, insulted our honour and struck a blow at our nationhood (qaumiyeh) [sic]. Everyone who does that gets the reward he deserves. In fact I've given orders to the Education Department not to send him and his companions any more invitations.[239]

The shaykh had in fact given his personal permission for the Educational Department to borrow the smoke and sound bombs from his Department of Public Security, indicating the growing nationalist mood within the Kuwaiti state as a whole.[240]

On February 1st 1959, the Educational Department's mass meetings culminated with the celebration of the first anniversary of the UAR's founding, which was called ᶜId al-Wihda (the Festival of Unity). The event revealed the extent of the department's Nasserist leanings and its ties to the nationalist opposition. While the celebration initially reflected the high degree of cooperation between the nationalist movement and the ruling family, it pushed this relationship to the breaking point. The initiative behind

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[237] "Kuwait Diary, 29 April – 18 May 1958," *Diaries*, Vol. 20, 633.
[238] BW/114/7: Muir to Middle East Dept., 6/10/1958.
[239] Ibid.,.
[240] Ibid.

the event came from the UKC and al-Rabita al-Kuwaitiyya (the Kuwaiti League), which the MAN formed in 1958 as a front for merchants aligned with the opposition movement.[241] According to al-Saddah, who at that time was Secretary General of the UKC and a headmaster, the Educational Department obligingly furnished the Shuwaikh Secondary School as a venue. Furthermore, its carpentry workshop built the parade floats that represented the various clubs and schools participating in the event.[242]

Support for the celebrations also came from the ruling family. In his capacity as acting ruler, Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah al-Mubarak proclaimed the day a public holiday, although it was not "on the official list of Government holidays."[243] Moreover, he ordered the mosques to pray for Arab unity, and on the morning of the event he participated in a parade around the town in which Jamal ᶜAbd al-Nasir's portrait was displayed. The President of the Educational Department ᶜAbd Allah al-Jabir represented the Al Sabah at the function held at the school. [244]

The display that day, which attracted "at least 20,000" spectators,[245] reflected the growing radicalism and self-assurance of Kuwait's Arab nationalist movement. It featured fiery speeches, all of which made "adverse references to the present Iraqi regime and 'Imperialism.'"[246] These were interspersed with "student processions with floats." The décor set the tone for the function: "the only portrait of the [Kuwaiti] Ruler on display was sandwiched between larger images of Colonels Nasser and Aref."[247] Prominent among the speakers was Ahmad Saᶜid, the director and chief announcer of

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[241] Al-Mdairis, "Arab Nationalist Movement," 210; al-Khatib 202; On al-Rabita al-Kuwaitiyya see: FO/371/132757: Halford to Riches, 27/8/1958; al-Khatib, 129-130, 163-167.
[242] Al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[243] FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 11/2/1959.
[244] Ibid.; FO/371/140081: DeCandole to Riches, 10/2/1959; DeCandole to Riches, 6/2/1959.
[245] FO/371/140081: PA to FO, 3/2/1959.
[246] FO/371/140081: DeCandole to Riches, 10/2/1959.
[247] FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 11/2/1959. The Nasserist and pro-UAR ᶜAbd al-Salam ᶜArif was a leader of the military junta that took power in Iraq in 1958, but was imprisoned by President ᶜAbd al-Karim Qasim in October of that year. Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 147-148.

Cairo's Voice of the Arabs radio station,[248] who was then visiting the country. In addition to attacking the leaders of Jordan, Tunisia, and Iraq, he "was wildly cheered when he said that revolution must not spring up here or there, but as an even harvest throughout the Arab world."[249] Another noteworthy participant was the female secondary school student ʿAwatif al-Badr, who eulogized the UAR on behalf of Kuwaiti women.[250] To add to this unprecedented emancipatory gesture, a group of female secondary school students "strolled round the arena ostentatiously trampling on their abbas."[251]

The speeches of the leaders of Kuwait's Arab nationalist opposition movement carried the greatest weight. Ahmad al-Khatib concerned himself with regional affairs, and is reported to have stated: "All wish to unite with the U.A.R."[252] The ex-Police Director Jasim al-Qatami, however, focused on Kuwait, stating: "I wish, oh brothers, that we were like Homs or Hama, with the flag of unity fluttering over us." Even more provocatively, he added: "if the Kuwaitis have been content with tribal rule since the time of Sabah the First, the time has now come for popular, democratic rule in which the people will have their constitution and ministers."[253] The ruler is said to have taken this reference to "tribal rule" as a personal insult and a deprecation of his modernizing reforms.[254] The following day, he began his crackdown against the nationalist opposition. The impact of these measures and subsequent developments was acutely felt in the Educational Department, where the mounting tide of nationalism now began to fall, never to return to its previous height.

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[248] Douglas Boyd, "Development of Egypt's Radio: 'Voice of the Arabs' Under Nasser," *Journalism Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (Winter, 1975), 646, 652.
[249] FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 11/2/1959.
[250] FO/371/140081: DeCandole to Riches, 10/2/1959; al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud.
[251] FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 11/2/1959.
[252] FO/371/140081: DeCandole to Riches, 10/2/1959; al-Khatib, 202.
[253] Al-Khatib, 203.
[254] Ibid., 205-206.

The Ruling Family's Response, 1959-1961

The day after the UAR anniversary celebrations, the Public Security Department called in the organizers of the event and reprimanded them severely, withdrawing their passports and firing those with government jobs. They included the two UKC and MAN affiliated headmasters ʿAbd Allah Ahmad Husain and Khalid al-Masʿud. Over the next few days, the government permanently shut down all clubs and newspapers, even those not linked to the event,[255] and warned against protests.[256] The ruler outlined the reasons for this response in a leaflet in which he criticized "certain youth" for endangering Kuwait's relations with other Arab countries, and for personally insulting him despite his prosperous reign. At the same time, he admitted that shortcomings existed in some departments, and promised that they would soon be rectified.[257]

As the ruler's statement suggested, the stick was accompanied by a carrot in the form of an intensive campaign of administrative reform. A departmental reshuffle was announced only days after the crackdown.[258] Before the month was over, the Supreme Council undertook to employ the eminent Egyptian jurist ʿAbd al-Razzaq al-Sanhuri to construct a modern legal system for Kuwait, and appointed an advisory committee made up of seven merchants.[259] The latter included the nationalists al-Saniʿ and al-Nisf, and others associated with the 1930s Majlis Movement.[260] With the assistance of al-Sanhuri and other experts, the council set about improving the administration of departments and issuing a spate of new legislation, such that by 1960 the country had

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[255] FO/371/140081: Outward Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office, 17/2/1959; Halford to Middleton, 11/2/1959; DeCandole to Riches, 10/2/1959; DeCandole to Riches, 6/2/1959; PA to FO, 5/2/1959; "Iʿlan," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, February 8, 1959, 3.
[256] "Bayan," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, February 2, 1959, 1.
[257] "Bayan ila al-Shaʿb al-Kuwaiti al-Karim," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, February 8, 1959, 2; FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 11/2/1959; PA to FO, 5/2/1959.
[258] *Al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, February 8, 1959, 1; FO/371/140081: Outward Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office, 17/2/1959.
[259] Ahmad Hijazi, "Kuwait: Development from a Semitribal, Semicolonial Society to Democracy and Sovereignty," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 13, no. 3 (Summer, 1964), 433; FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 26/2/1959.
[260] FO/371/140083: Halford to Middleton, 4/11/1959.

acquired "the framework of a governmental machine a l'Egyptienne."[261] Finally, the ruler also sought to centralize power and reduce corruption among the shaykhs. This led him to dismiss the notorious Fahad al-Salim in 1959, followed by ᶜAbd Allah al-Mubarak in 1961.[262]

Given its role in organizing the UAR anniversary celebrations, it is only natural that the crackdown carried repercussions for the Educational Department. Immediately after the repression began, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain submitted his resignation, followed by his personal secretary Ahmad al-ᶜAdwani and the Director of Social Affairs Hamad al-Rujaib. However, their resignations were refused, and they were apparently convinced to retain their positions.[263] Nevertheless, it is clear that the ruling family sought to rein in the Educational Department's hitherto largely independent administration. The British Council's report for 1959-1960 states: "sports days are not allowed to turn into political demonstrations; [and] there has been no cultural season this year, always in the past an outlet for political speechifying under the cloak of culture and education."[264] In fact, the cultural season would never again be held.[265] Furthermore, an appointed Educational Council was restored in March 1960.[266] The Political Agent reported that it was "composed of nine dour Kuwaiti merchants with instructions to keep a watchful eye on… the activities of Sayyid Abdul Aziz Hussain."[267]

It appears that these British observers were overoptimistic regarding the ruling family's will to curtail nationalist influence within the department. In 1959, the British Council representative observed that "the real explanation" behind the crackdown was "that the reformists mingled their support for Nasser and Egypt with aspirations for

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[261] FO/371/156823: Annual Review, 1960; FO/371/140083: Halford to Lloyd, 11/6/1959.
[262] S. Simon, 98-99, 140.
[263] FO/371/140082: PA to PR, 19/2/1959; FO/371/140081: Outward Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office, 17/2/1959; PA to FO, 5/2/1959.
[264] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1959-1960, 4.
[265] Al-Saddah, 23.
[266] *Al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, March 6, 1960, 22.
[267] FO/371/149140: PA to PR, 12/6/1960.

more power at home." Relations with Egypt were a different matter, on which the ruler's position was as yet unclear.[268] In fact, Kuwait's ties to Egypt appear to have been unscathed by the affair. Despite rumors of Egyptian educational employees resigning in protest at the repression, none actually did, and there was "suspicion that Cairo has advised teachers to hold their hands."[269] For their part, the Kuwaiti authorities did not take any measures against the Egyptian Educational Mission. As the Political Agent observed, "clearly the Ruler no more wants a showdown… than the Egyptians themselves seem to want it."[270] Kuwait continued to rely on Egyptian expertise in education and other fields, as in the legal and administrative reform discussed above.

The 1959 crackdown by no means signaled a wholesale rejection of Arab nationalist and Nasserist ideology on the part of the ruling family, and in the subsequent period the Educational Department continued to implement nationalist policies. For example, in December 1959, the department issued what a British Council report described as a "fierce edict" imposing new rules for private educational institutions.[271] These aimed to "affirm national sovereignty" and serve "national (*qawmīyya*) goals" by requiring all private institutions to teach their Arab students the "national (*qawmīyya*) subjects." These were listed as: Arabic, religion, history, geography, and civic education, all of which had to be taught in Arabic.[272] In 1960, moreover, a committee of experts tasked with drafting a plan for the establishment of a national university included Qustantin Zuraiq, suggesting that ties to the former Red Book Group network were alive and well.[273] Even more tellingly, the supposed ban on the politicization of sports days did not last long. The British Council's 1960-1961 report states: "the Annual Sports Day given this year… took the form of large ballet displays, hundreds of

[268] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1958-1959, 6.
[269] FO/371/140081: PA to FO, 12/2/1959.
[270] FO/371/140081: Halford to Middleton, 26/2/1959. See also: FO/371/140082: PA to FO, 31/5/1959.
[271] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1959-1960, 4.
[272] *Taqrir 1960-1961*, 138-140.
[273] FO/371/149140: Egerton to Marshall, 24/1/1960.

boys dressed in khaki dug trenches, bayonetted their opponents and stimulated everyone into anti-Israel feeling."[274]

The Educational Department also continued its support of Pan-Arab causes. As if to reaffirm its Arab nationalist stance in the wake of the 1959 crackdown, the government intensified its fundraising campaign in support of the Algerian revolution.[275] The Educational Department participated alongside other departments in collecting donations for this fund in the summer of 1959.[276] In November 1961, the Kuwaiti government observed the Day of Solidarity With Algeria with a symbolic ten-minute strike. As part of the event, the Educational Department organized a demonstration of male and female students in Kuwait City. In addition, it did not serve students their morning meals, instead donating their cost to Algeria.[277]

The government's administrative reform was probably more effective in hindering the Educational Department's nationalist activities than its punitive measures. The reforms began to undermine the decentralization that allowed the Kuwaiti *muthaqqafīn* and their Arab expatriate colleagues to run the department more or less independently. The expansion of central authority is apparent in the standardization of legislation and administrative practices, and the increased effectiveness of the Supreme Council.[278] Moreover, the downfall of shaykhs Fahad al-Salim and ᶜAbd Allah al-Mubarak marked a decline in the independent fiefdoms that characterized the Kuwaiti administration in the 1940s and 1950s. The lack of "important family opposition" following the departure of these men enabled the ruler to "accelerate the centralization and formalization of

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[274] BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1960-1961, 13.
[275] Coverage of the campaign was published in the following issues of *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*: 10/5/1959, 17/5/1959, 24/5/1959, 19/7/1959, 20/9/1959, 26/11/1959, 30/3/1961, 5/11/1961. See also: FO/371/156824: Kuwait Diary, October 25 – November 24 1961; Kuwait Diary, January 25 – February 24 1961; Kuwait Diary, December 25 1960 – January 24 1961; Kuwait Diary, November 24 – December 24 1960; FO/371/156823: Annual Review, 1960.
[276] "Asmaᵓ al-Mutabariᶜin li-Mujahidi al-Jazaᵓir," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, July 19, 1959, 10.
[277] "Yawm al-Tadamun maᶜ al-Jazaᵓir," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, November 19, 1961, 5.
[278] Al-ᶜIsa, 67-68.

family rule."[279]

The central government now administered the Educational Department much more closely, and while the department was still allowed to engage in Arab nationalist activities it now did so at the government's behest. In January 1962, the British Ambassador observed:

> The political activities of the [Egyptian teachers]… have been more strictly controlled… It is true that on public occasions organised by the Department proper homage is paid, not always in very restrained terms, to the causes of the Arabs, but these are causes to which the Ruling Family themselves subscribe.[280]

This is apparent in the pro-Algerian activities mentioned above, which formed part of a larger government policy. Furthermore, as a result of the imposition of central control, the department's scope for engaging in activities outside the educational sphere became severely limited. The department had already forfeited its role in backing the clubs and the press. In May 1959, the ruler issued two edicts that further restricted its range of activity, particularly on the transnational level. The first prevented all departments apart from Social Affairs from distributing financial assistance to any individual or entity.[281] The second allocated to the Press and Publishing department the sole responsibility for dealing with newspapers and journalists domestically and internationally.[282]

The former edict appears to have virtually ended the Educational Department's independent program of assistance for cultural and political groups abroad. This is revealed by a letter received from Baghdad's Islamic Education Association in May 1960 asking for the continuation of the annual payment it had been receiving from the department. The Educational Council could only forward this request to the Social Affairs Department with a recommendation that the payment be continued.[283] Restrictions even appear to have been placed on the department's ability to grant

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[279] Crystal, 84.
[280] FO/371/162937: Richmond to Earl of Home, 5/1/1962.
[281] "Marsum Amiri 9," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, May 10, 1959, 1.
[282] "Marsum Amiri 11," *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, May 17, 1959, 1.
[283] "Jalsat Majlis al-Maʿarif al-Thamina, 18/5/1960" *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, May 29, 1960, 38.

scholarships to Arab students. Thus, when the South Arabian League asked the Educational Council to provide further scholarships for its students in February 1961, the latter passed on the request to the Supreme Council.[284]

Surprisingly, the Educational Department's Arab nationalist orientation was dealt an even heavier blow by the emergence of a rapprochement between the ruler and the opposition. In late 1960, there began a gradual easing of restrictions on the clubs and the press.[285] In March 1961, rumors emerged that the MAN leader Jasim al-Qatami would join the soon to be established Foreign Ministry. With Kuwait's independence looming, the ruler apparently felt that the opposition's educated cadres and pan-Arab credentials would help attain regional recognition for his fledgling state.[286] The need for this help became crucial when Iraq laid claim to Kuwait days after its independence in June 1961.[287] In October, al-Qatami became Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry,[288] while the dismissed headmaster and MAN member ᶜAbd Allah Ahmad Husain was also appointed to a senior position.[289]

Given the Educational Department's high proportion of *muthaqqafīn*, the institution became a primary recruiting ground for Kuwait's nascent diplomatic corps, and thus lost many of its most capable and committed employees.[290] The worldly ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain, with his strong pan-Arab connections, was the perfect candidate to represent Kuwait at the United Nations in June 1961, and subsequently at the Arab League.[291] Although his duties required him to be abroad for most of the time, he continued to nominally serve as Director of Education until he reluctantly accepted the

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[284] "Jalsat Majlis al-Maᶜarif al-27, 27/2/1961" *al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, March 12, 1961, 30.
[285] FO/371/162879: Annual Review, 1961; FO/371/156823: Annual Review, 1960.
[286] FO/371/156825: PA to FO, 11/3/1961; al-Khatib, 213-214.
[287] FO/371/162879: Annual Review, 1961.
[288] FO/371/156824: Kuwait Diary, September 25 – October 24, 1961.
[289] Al-Saddah, 28-29; al-Khatib, 214.
[290] Al-Saddah, 11, 28; al-Saddah, Interview by Al-Rashoud; FO/371/162937: Richmond to Earl of Home, 5/1/1962.
[291] FO/371/156824: Kuwait Diary, July 25 – August 24, 1961; Kuwait Diary, June 25 –July 24, 1961.

post of Kuwaiti ambassador to Cairo in December.[292] The untimely death of Assistant Director Darwish al-Miqdadi in March compounded the department's leadership crisis.[293] Other department employees who transferred to the Foreign Ministry in 1961 alone include:

- Muhammad al-Saddah – Headmaster and MAN member,[294]
- Ya^{c}qub al-Rushaid – Teacher at Kuwaiti school in Karachi and MAN member,[295]
- Muhalhil al-Mudaf – Inspector of Physical Education,[296]
- ^{c}Abd Allah Bishara – Vice Principal of Shuwaikh Secondary School,[297]
- Hasan al-Dabbagh – Inspector of English (Palestinian),[298]
- Sulaiman Abu Ghosh – Inspector of Non-Government Schools (Palestinian).[299]

Over the next several years, the department lost more of its high-ranking employees to the Foreign Ministry and other departments.[300] It thus ceased to be the main site of employment for the *muthaqqafīn* within the bureaucracy.

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[292] KOC/106407: Lomax to DeCandole, 6/12/1961; Tandy to Gov. Relations, 4/10/1961; Tandy to Gov. Relations, 6/9/1961.
[293] *Al-Kuwait al-Yawm*, March 19, 1961.
[294] Al-Saddah, 28-29.
[295] KOC/106407: Lomax to Gov. Relations, 8/11/1961.
[296] FO/371/156926: al-Ansari to Hillier-Fry, 14/8/1961.
[297] Ibid.
[298] KOC/106407: Lomax to DeCandole, 20/12/1961; BW/114/6: Annual Report, 1960-1961, 15.
[299] KOC/106407: Lomax to DeCandole, 20/12/1961; FO/371/156825: Richmond to Beaumont, 22/4/1961.
[300] Ibrahim al-Shatti, Interview by Milaiji, *Asatidha fi Maidan Akhar*, 192; al-Hamad, Interview by Milaiji, 19; al-Salih, Interview by Milaiji, 136; al-Khrafi, 972-973, 1141.

Conclusion

This thesis seeks to elucidate the depth of Kuwait's engagement with modernist ideology generally and Arab nationalism specifically, with implications for the study of the Gulf region as a whole. It challenges the conventional wisdom as to when Arab nationalist ideology first spread to Kuwait, the extent of its political and social influence, and the country's role in its development and dissemination. It argues that the educational field was central to Kuwait's prolonged and profound engagement with Arab nationalism. While much of the literature implicitly assumes that Kuwait's Arab nationalist movement sprang-up fully formed around the 1930s, the first chapter demonstrates that it in fact grew out of a pre-existing Islamic modernist movement with strong Arabist tendencies and wide-ranging regional connections. This latter movement emerged in the first two decades of the twentieth century, a time when, according to many scholars, Kuwait was cut off from the influence of the more developed Arab countries. While it is indisputable that Kuwait and the Gulf were situated at the periphery of the Arab world during this period, the persistent myth of a region existing in pristine, traditional isolation until the arrival of oil must be discarded. On the contrary, modern schools, the press, cultural and charitable associations, visits by prominent Arab personalities, and merchant communities abroad all facilitated a vibrant intellectual exchange with the Arab states that had a transformative impact on Kuwaiti society.

The second chapter traces the expansion of this modernist movement, and its gradual turn towards a more secular Arab nationalist ideology. It details the neglected origins of organized Arab nationalist activism in the early 1930s, years before the discovery of oil, and its close ties to developments in Iraq and Palestine. It goes on to draw connections between the merchants' Pan-Arab activism and their founding of the elected administrative councils. This is particularly apparent in the 1936 Educational

Council, whose members relied on their political ties to Amin al-Husaini and Muhammad ʿAli al-Tahir to staff Kuwait's schools. Arab nationalist influence was thus very closely tied to the modernization of the Kuwaiti state. The chapter also argues that Arab nationalist ideology and regional networks were central to the Majlis Movement of 1938/1939, an aspect denied or downplayed by many scholars. Finally, the chapter places early state education in Kuwait within the broader Arab context, demonstrating that it resembled other Arab states in its politicization and susceptibility to cross-border influences. Contrary to exaggerated conceptions of Gulf exceptionalism, 1930s Kuwait thus exhibited significant commonalities with its northern Arab neighbors in both politics and education.

The under studied decade of the 1940s forms the subject of the third chapter, which demonstrates that Arab nationalist activity continued in the face of unfavorable domestic and regional climates. Unable to engage in conventional politics, Kuwait's budding proto-*effendiyya*, many of them teachers and scholarship graduates, used the schools as a base for activism focused within the cultural field. They received support from certain Arab nationalist members of the Educational Council, indicating that nationalist influence within the state survived the demise of the Majlis Movement. Though they cooperated with certain Arab expatriate teachers, it was the local teachers who spearheaded this cultural nationalist current at a time when the Egyptian educational administration was ambivalent towards Arab nationalism. This reverses the prevailing image of Arab expatriates indoctrinating a passive Kuwaiti populace, demonstrating the extent to which Arab nationalism had become rooted within the country.

During the 1950s, Arab nationalism once again returned to the forefront of Kuwaiti politics with the reemergence of a popular opposition movement led by the MAN, the influx of Arab expatriates, and the rising power of Nasserist Egypt. Although

the existing literature addresses these themes, it largely limits its analysis to clubs and political groups. Chapters Four and Five provide a more holistic assessment of Arab nationalism in Kuwait during this decade, addressing its broader influence within society and the state. They investigate the social underpinnings of the nationalist movement through an analysis of its vanguard, the *muthaqqafīn* stratum, which corresponds to the intelligentsia and the Arab *effendiyya*. This yet again undermines Gulf exceptionalism by allowing Kuwait's Arab nationalist movement to be compared to other such movements in the Arab states and beyond.

The fourth and fifth chapters also detail how the *muthaqqafīn*, in concert with sympathetic shaykhs, Palestinian expatriates, and seconded Egyptian experts, carved out spheres of Arab nationalist influence within the Kuwaiti state. These were the Educational Department and its offshoots, the Departments of Social Affairs, and Press and Publishing. With the Nasserist fervor of the late 1950s, an Arab nationalist mood became apparent within the government as a whole. Rather than opposing the state outright, the Arab nationalist movement thus intersected with it in a complex manner, as is most clearly exhibited by the Educational Department's support for the popular protests during the Suez Crisis.

Finally, the Educational Department's policies in the 1950s reveal that Kuwait was an important site in the development of the Arab nationalist approach to education. That Kuwait preceded Nasserist Egypt in making the fostering of Arab national awareness a primary goal of its curriculum marks out the tiny Gulf state as a leader in this field. This is largely attributable to Darwish al-Miqdadi, who first pushed for curricular reform on Arab nationalist lines, and drew on the expertise of a host of prominent nationalist educators, many of them associated with the Red Book Group network. However, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain and other Kuwaiti staff came to play an active

role in this policy early on, belying the British assumption that Egyptian machinations were mostly to blame for the department's nationalist position.

In addition to reassessing Kuwait's engagement with Arab nationalism, this thesis calls for a new understanding of the history of the modern state in Kuwait and the Gulf, and disputes widely held assumptions within the rentier state literature. It advances three main points. Firstly, it demonstrates that the modernization of the state began in the pre-oil era, and that institutions founded in this period continued to form the basis of the post-oil state. Kuwait's first modern state institutions were the elected Municipal and Educational Councils of 1930 and 1936, which oversaw specialized government departments with legal regulations and independent budgets. The 1938 Legislative Council took the modernization process further, creating new government departments. After defeating the Majlis Movement, Shaykh Ahmad al-Jabir retained the administrative council system (albeit without elections) and expanded it throughout the 1940s. In 1950, Shaykh ʿAbd Allah al-Salim reintroduced the elected administrative councils, which persisted until 1954. Subsequently, the ruler formed appointed councils intermittently until independence in 1961.

The continuity between pre and post-oil institutions was not only in form. This thesis argues that the progressive, Arab nationalist character of the Educational Department in the 1950s was to a large extent a legacy of the 1930s. This was in large part due to the continued presence of reformist merchants on the Educational Council. The extent to which oil altered the basic structure of the state must therefore not be overstated.

The thesis also challenges rentier state theory's position on the division between state and society, arguing that popular oppositional forces wielded significant influence over governmental institutions. Even after oil rents began to empower the ruler at the expense of the merchant opposition in the 1940s, the latter were able to retain a degree

of representation on the administrative councils due to the shaykh's conciliatory policy. The merchant opposition had considerably weakened by this point, but this was by no means the case with the *muthaqqafīn* in the 1950s. Their increasing influence over key sectors of the bureaucracy coincided with their assumption of leadership over the country's opposition movement. Moreover, they were able to capitalize on their position within the state to divert resources towards supporting their political activism.

Finally, this thesis builds upon Hertog's argument regarding the variegated and fragmented nature of the rentier state in the Gulf, adding that state institutions not only varied markedly in levels of efficiency but also ideological outlook. In 1950s Kuwait, departments presided over by the *muthaqqafīn* and sympathetic shaykhs comprised quasi-independent bastions of Arab nationalism and progressivism that contrasted sharply with the corrupt and patrimonial character of certain shaykhly fiefdoms. This was made possible by a high degree of decentralization within the state due not only to intra-ruling family factionalism, but also the penetration of the state by external actors such as Egyptian missions and (in the early 1950s) British advisers. This highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the pre-independence Gulf state, often sweepingly characterized as a traditional tribal entity under firm British tutelage.

The final area to which this thesis seeks to contribute is an analysis of the role of education in the formation of national identity. It identifies three broad approaches to this issue within nationalism theory: top-down, grassroots, and indirect, and argues that all three apply to the case of education in Kuwait at different stages in its development. During the formative stage of the 1910s and 1920s, modern education with a strong Arabist (if not yet Arab nationalist) character emerged as the result of grassroots initiatives. These merchant-funded schools, which were part of a broader Arab-oriented cultural movement, accord with Chatterjee's theory of anti-colonial nationalism emerging in the "spiritual domain" before asserting itself politically. They employed

politically minded Arab teachers who exerted a great deal of influence on their students and society at large. Furthermore, they made it easier for Kuwaitis to pursue their education in Arab countries, undertaking Andersonian "pilgrimages" whereby they recognized their common Arabness.

Following the advent of state education in 1936, the Palestinian teachers introduced Iraq's Arab nationalist curriculum to Kuwait, thus inaugurating the top-down method of nationalist inculcation. At the same time, ideologically committed Palestinian and Syrian teachers continued to disseminate Arab nationalist ideas on the grassroots level through interpersonal interaction and extracurricular activities. Moreover, scholarships began to increase the numbers of Kuwaiti youth engaging in Pan-Arab "pilgrimages," and the first hints of the indirect, social effects of education became felt as small numbers of these students returned to Kuwait, having adopted the modernistic worldview and habits of the *effendiyya.*

The onset of Egyptian control over the Educational Department in 1943 and the importation of a new curriculum from Cairo ended the department's top-down policy of Arab nationalist education. However, Arab nationalist Kuwaiti teachers, in association with their Arab expatriate colleagues, continued to foster an Arab nationalist identity on the grassroots level. With the political field severely restricted, the "spiritual domain" of the schools acquired renewed importance for Kuwait's Arab nationalists, who used it as a base for cultural forms of Arab nationalist activism. While Egyptian control of education in Kuwait did not directly contribute to the growth of Arab nationalism, it did so indirectly by overseeing the expansion of the educational system, and providing unprecedented numbers of Kuwaiti youth the opportunity to study in Egypt on scholarship. These developments were central to the emergence of the *muthaqqafīn* stratum in the early 1950s.

With the appointment of Darwish al-Miqdadi as Director of Education in 1950, there began a gradual return to the top-down dissemination of Arab nationalism through the curriculum. This developed further after ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Husain assumed the helm of the department in 1952, culminating with Kuwait's first national curriculum of 1955-1956. At the same time, the *muthaqqafīn* coalesced into a distinct social stratum. In accordance with Smith's theory of the intelligentsia, the modernist and reformist aspirations of this stratum became channeled into a reinvigorated Arab nationalist opposition movement. Top-down, grassroots, and indirect processes can thus be seen to be intricately connected and mutually reinforcing, demonstrating the necessity of a nuanced and holistic approach to explaining the role of education in forging political identity.

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